THE

HIGHLANDS OF ÆTHIOPIA

DESCRIBED,

DURING EIGHTEEN MONTHS' RESIDENCE

OF

A British Embassy

AT

THE CHRISTIAN COURT OF SHOA.

Si forte Deus annueret votis nostris, ut amica Christianæ hujus nationis commercia cum nostratibus instituerentur.

LUDOLFI, *Comment. ad Hist. Æthiop.*

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THE

HIGHLANDS OF ÆTHIOPIA.

BY

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THE

HIGHLANDS OF ÆTHIOPIA,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM OF SHOA.

His Christian Majesty passed the greater portion of the wet night succeeding the presentation of the British Embassy, in revels amid the foreign riches so unexpectedly heaped upon him. Long tormented by curiosity which he had been afraid to gratify, he now minutely examined every novel article with all the greediness of the savage; and the royal scribes having been duly assembled, elaborate inventories were penned upon scrolls of parchment, to be deposited for the edification of posterity in the archives of the kingdom. The fire-arms and the

warlike munitions were transferred forthwith to the grand arsenal; the rich manufactures of the loom were added to the shelves of the palace wardrobes; and the curiosities, including the Chinese dancing girls, were carefully immured in the mouldy magazines of Mamrat, Kóndie, and Arámba, with labels and tickets setting forth their respective properties, and proclaiming to future occupants of the throne of Shoa that these wonders were added to the state treasures by the red men called Gyptzis, who came "from beyond" during the auspicious reign of Sáhela Selássie.

Ere day had dawned, the favourite page was deputed from the king to inquire whether all had slumbered happily. Etiquette demanded that our reply should be in the affirmative, but if an estimate were formed from the drenched and miserable aspect of the tent, the report made to the palace must have been far from favourable. In the absence of the cap, which had been lost upon the road, the fly of the marquee was hastily lashed with cords to the pole, and becoming saturated during the night by the pelting storm, it had presently slidden down, and formed a funnel, which completely put an end to sleep.

Hajji Kásim and Izhák, who, with some of their bigoted Moslem retainers, had repaired to court to witness the reception of "the Christian dogs," had presented themselves at nightfall, wet, shivering, and famished, to implore food and shelter, which

had been denied by the officers of the royal household. Upon the principle of good for evil, we gave them abundance to eat, and each of us contributed a share of his bedding, but the untoward fall of the canvass proved equally disagreeable to Christian and to Mohammadan. Drenched to the skin, the true believers, spite of their covering of lard, were fairly swamped where they lay; and the Ras el Káfilah's pet Korán having been trampled under foot in the confusion attendant upon repitching, he angrily left the tent in the morning by one door, at the moment that the spoiled page entered by the other, grumbling as he went, "Allah! how could the sacred volume experience any better fate at the hand of infidels?"

Six hundred peasants, who had been pressed on the service of the state from the Mohammadan villages of Argóbba, after transporting the king's baggage from Alio Amba to Machal-wans, had bivouacked without food or shelter upon the bare saturated ground, and were strewed over the greensward like the slain on a battle-field. As the day dawned, their loud cries of "*Abiet, abiet,*" "Master, master," arose to the palace-gates from every quarter of the valley; but they lifted up their sad voices in vain; and reiterated entreaties for dismissal passing unheeded, I with great difficulty succeeded in purchasing for them a sufficient number of oxen, which were instantly slaughtered, and eaten raw upon the spot.

The sceptic in Europe who still withholds his

credence from Bruce's account of an Abyssinian brind feast, would have been edified by the sight now presented on the royal meadow. Crowds swarmed around each sturdy victim to the knife, and impetuously rushing in with a simultaneous yell, seized horns, and legs, and tail. A violent struggle to escape followed the assault. Each vigorous bound shook off and scattered a portion of the assailants, but the stronger and more athletic still retained their grasp, and resolutely grappling and wrestling with the prize, finally prevailed. With a loud groan of despair the bull was thrown kicking to the earth. Twenty crooked knives flashed at once from the scabbard—a tide of crimson gore proclaimed the work of death, and the hungry butchers remained seated on the quivering carcass, until the last bubbling jet had welled from the widely-severed throat.

Rapidly from that moment advanced the work of demolition. The hide was opened in fifty places, and collop after collop of warm flesh and muscle—sliced and scooped from the bone—was borne off in triumph. Groups of feasting savages might now be seen seated on the wet grass in every direction, greedily munching and bolting the raw repast. Entrails and offal did not escape. In a quarter of an hour nought remained of the carcass save hoofs and horns, and the disappointed vultures of the air assembling round the scene of slaughter with the village curs, found little indeed to satisfy their hunger.

During this general carousal of the grateful host, the smooth-spoken purveyor-general, who was completely at a loss to comprehend the meaning of the liberality extended, advanced with a sleek and pampered band of parasites. The assistance of the unfeeling functionary had been craved in vain, and he now, after casting a contemptuous glance towards the sated serfs, in honied words inquired with obvious surprise, "whether the party had not rested well, that they thus troubled their heads unnecessarily about the worthless bondsmen of the Negoos?"

No suitable lodging being obtainable at Machalwans, I deemed it advisable to adopt the king's proposal of proceeding at once into winter quarters at the capital. Preparatory to setting out thither we had an audience of the king. "My children," quoth His Majesty, "all my gun-people shall accompany you; may you enter in safety! Whatsoever your hearts think and wish, that send word unto me. Saving myself, ye have no relative in this distant land. Ye have travelled far on my affairs. I will give you what I can, according to that which my country produces. I cannot give you what I do not possess. Be not afraid of me. Listen not to the evil insinuations of my people, for they are bad. Look only unto Sáhela Selássie. May his father die, he will accomplish whatsoever ye desire!"

The sun shone brightly through the fleecy white clouds, as our party left the wet encampment in the

valley, and under an escort of fusileers took the way to the capital without that regret which is usually felt on quitting the precincts of royalty. A green, swampy meadow led to the foot of the mountains, over which numberless cascades foamed furiously to the plain. Supported from the base to the utmost summit by artificial terraces, and clothed with the most luxuriant cultivation, there were parts over which it seemed hardly possible that the plough should have passed at so great an angle. But wheat and barley delight in a dry stony soil, and with a fair proportion of the "former and the latter rain," will here yield abundant return to those who, by their industry, strive to emulate the prosperity of more happily located neighbours.

From Machal-wans to Ankóber the distance does not exceed six miles; but the ascent is great and immediate, and the reduction in temperature perceptible at every step. Springs gushed out clear and sparkling on either side of the rugged path, and beautiful plants luxuriated in the moist atmosphere. The prospect was altogether delightful, and the change more than ever striking from the hot deserts of the Adaïel, which now, at a yet greater depression, stretched away in fading tints to the extreme point of vision.

The latter portion of the road lay through the forest of Aferbeine. Cedar-like junipers, dried up by the blast of centuries, rearing towards the sky their tall skeleton forms, rocked to every breeze.

Younger scions of the stock, clothed in a sombre cypress garb, flourished in vigour among the drooping and silvery *woira*, of which the pensive branches were hoary with ancient moss hanging in fanciful festoons; and saving when the zephyr sighed through the foliage, or a bird whistled from the topmost branch, silence reigned throughout the sylvan scene.

Whether in Europe or in half-civilised Abyssinia, monastic establishments are invariably seated in spots the most romantic. Deep in the recesses of Aferbeine stands the church and monastery dedicated to Tekla Haïmanót, an ecclesiastic of extraordinary abilities, who flourished during the thirteenth century, and rescuing the greater portion of the empire from the yoke of usurpation, restored it to the hands of Yekweno Amlak, the lineal descendant of the ancient Æthiopic dynasty. Subsequently canonised for his successful exertions in the cause both of Church and State, the monk, whose history is obscured with numberless superstitious traditions, is to the present day held in the highest veneration. Thrice during the year a festival is held in celebration of his birth, death, and ascension, and by the entire Christian population he is regarded as the patron saint of Abyssinia.

Instantly on emerging from the forest, the metropolis of Shoa, spreading far and wide over a verdant mountain, shaped like Afric's appropriate emblem, the fabled sphynx, presented a most singular, if not

imposing appearance. Clusters of thatched houses of all sizes and shapes, resembling barns and hay-stacks, with small green enclosures and splinter palings, rising one above the other in very irregular tiers, adapt themselves to all the inequalities of the rugged surface; some being perched high on the abrupt verge of a cliff, and others so involved in the bosom of a deep fissure as scarcely to reveal the red earthen pot which crowns the apex. Connected with each other by narrow lanes and hedgerows, these rude habitations, the residence of from twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants, cover the entire mountain-side to the extreme pinnacle—a lofty spire-like cone, detaching itself by a narrow isthmus to form the sphynx's head. Hereon stands the palace of the Negoos, a most ungainly-looking edifice with staring gable ends, well fortified by spiral lines of wooden palisades. They extend from the base to the summit, and are interspersed with barred stockades, between which are profusely scattered the abodes of household slaves, with breweries, kitchens, cellars, storehouses, magazines, and granaries.

Over those portions unengrossed by cultivation or by architecture, shrubs and bushes and great beds of nettles assumed the most luxuriant and lively appearance. Huge fallen masses of rock strewed the lower valleys, and others seemed ready to be launched at a moment's notice upon the clustering habitations; whilst in the distance, the bronze

cross of the church of "our Lady," peeping above the dark foliage of the juniper, touched the chord of feelings but little in unison with the wild escort that surrounded us, above whose streaming locks floated bloody emblems, that breathed aught save conformity to the mild tenets of the Christian religion.

Ankóber, literally translated, signifies the gate of Anko. She was queen over the Galla tribe, by which this mountain was peopled from the invasion of Graan until its reconquest by the crown of Shoa, and has bequeathed her name to the narrow winding path which forms the "*ber*" or gate to the suburbs. Skirting the brink of a yawning abyss, and scarcely wide enough for the foot of a mule, it is not traversed without a feeling of insecurity, and the labour of a few hours would suffice to render all approach to the capital impracticable, unless to the mountain goat. Loud cheers from the whole assembled population, female as well as male, greeted our arrival, for the thunder of our guns in the adjacent valley had given birth to a feeling of respect in the breast of all; nor was it without considerable difficulty that we made our way through the dense crowd that whitened the entire hill-side, and lined every valley. At length we reached a newly erected building fronting the palace, which had been set apart by His Majesty for our occupation, and which was now completely thronged by porters, and beleaguered by clamorous spectators.

Wistful looks were exchanged as we entered this barn-like and dreary abode, which for months, if not for years, was to form our asylum. A decent new thatch, and a neat basket-work ceiling, did indeed form a roof to the structure, but further, the crude and unfinished shell whereon they rested, could hardly claim the denomination of "a house." It rather resembled a den in Exeter 'Change, or an aviary upon a magnified scale; and the open hide-lashed ribs, being innocent throughout of dab or plaster to choke the interstices, wind, rain, and mountain fog considered themselves to be equally His Majesty's guests, and entitled to the occupation of the uninviting interior. Oblong in form, windowless, chimneyless, and provided at either end with a lofty but narrow door, rudely fashioned of massive planks and beams, each of which, in the absence of a saw, had involved the demolition of an entire tree, the edifice yet afforded an unusually favourable specimen of Shoan architecture; and to account for its desolate and unfinished condition, it may be proper to add, that the proprietor, who had been honoured with the fair hand of a princess of the blood royal, having a few weeks previously been so unfortunate as to incur the displeasure of his despotic father-in-law, now occupied apartments in the state prison, whilst the management of his estate was, *ad interim*, considerately undertaken by the crown, without even the preliminary of a *fieri facias*.

Inner walls divided the centre room from two narrow verandahs, intended for the reception of mules, horses, and household lumber. The floor was precisely as nature made it, depressed rather than raised, and little improved by the many recent inundations to which it had been subjected. Torrents of muddy water filled the trench which environed the entire structure, and occasionally bursting the banks of the dyke, oozed copiously between the palisades, to cover the soil with artificial lakes; whilst the small open area beyond, into which it disembogued—hemmed in on all sides by rank vegetation, stinging nettles, and half-ruined but noisily inhabited hovels—was, without any exaggeration, eighteen inches deep in honest mire.

Although our pilgrimage had at last terminated, the prospect, both within and without, was still far from encouraging. The mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at 58°, and it became necessary to adopt immediate measures towards the exclusion of the cold driving mist and the whistling wind, which the absence of a fire rendered far from agreeable. The union flag of old England, stretched across the hall, lent the aid of its ample folds to enliven the interior. Tent walls and tarpaulins composed tolerably comfortable cabins in the verandah closets. Gun-cases, placed on end, and connected by the lid of a chest, formed a temporary table, and with a puncheon as a washing-stand, and two swinging shelves overhead, con-

pleted the furniture of each apartment. Boxes and bales, as they continued to arrive, were piled around the inner walls, and soon reaching to the ceiling, the appearance of a booth at a country fair, on a rainy day, ere the wares have been exposed for sale, was gradually imparted to this highly unique residency in the capital of Shoa.

CHAPTER II.

RESIDENCE IN ANKÓBER.

But darkness now reigned within our cheerless abode. Candles that will burn for more than ten minutes together, or afford light sufficient either to read or write, are luxuries which have no existence in so primitive and benighted a land; and strips of old cotton rag dipped in unpurified bees' wax, forming, like most other good things in the empire, a royal monopoly, are doled out by the purveyor-general to the favoured few with but a niggard hand; whilst the absence of glass or other transparent substance, and the continued presence of rain, sleet, clouds, and fog thicker than the steam of a wash-house, rendered it for some time difficult to admit the scanty light of heaven during its fitful visits through the overcast atmosphere.

Wood, too, belongs exclusively to the despot, and is far from being abundant in the timberless realm; but packing cases, as they became empty, were furnished with a sheet of oiled parchment, and these admirable substitutes for glazed sashes, were, in defiance of exhortations not to deface the king's walls, inserted therein from time to time. A

chafing dish, raised upon a high mud pedestal, at length cheered the long dreary evenings, although the wet sodden fuel yielded a very feeble blaze, whilst its dense smoke, choking the chimneyless room, covered walls and roof with soot. Last, but not least among our improvements, were tallow dips, which we manufactured of the fat tail of the Æthiopian sheep, and these afforded us sufficient light by which to retire to bed, where fleas, revived by the unwonted warmth of English blankets, denied all rest.

The low moaning of the storm behind Mamrat, and the distant growl of the thunder, usually ushered in the night. There was a sound as of the surf breaking over a rocky shore, and before many minutes the hurricane was at its height. Crashing reverberations of thunder rattled among the serrated cliffs, whilst the gates of heaven poured forth a deluge, which rendered every lane and footpath throughout the town, ankle deep in running water.

Often after one of those falls of rain so common in tropical countries, the face of the lowlands for fifty miles would be concealed under an impenetrable fog. The spectator rode upon a sea of billowy clouds which rolled beneath his foot, lashing with their spray the dark islands formed by the peaks of the higher mountains: and beyond, in the hot Adel plain might be seen the Háwash winding through the distance, until melted into the limits of the horizon. As the great bank ascended, all around became wet and clammy to the touch; and the mist.

although sluggish and slow to move, was of a nature so keenly searching, that in defiance of all muffling, it seemed to penetrate to our very bones.

Together with those privations which are common to a residence among all savage nations, there are many which Abyssinia claims exclusively as her own; nor, if viewed only as a place of abode, does the country possess aught save the salubrity of the climate to counterbalance its manifold discomforts and disadvantages. Although in the midst of abundance, we experienced the utmost difficulty in obtaining the most common necessaries of existence—bread, meat, and water; and notwithstanding that a sufficiency of wheat to sustain life for an entire year may be purchased for one German crown, yet where the stranger is concerned, the grain, without the assistance of the monarch, can scarcely be converted into the staff of life—the process entailing all the petty worry and annoyance which in other lands are solely undertaken and performed by menials.

In a kingdom where the inhabitants are solely dependent upon the exertions of slaves, the difficulties are increased ten-fold to those who are obliged to employ hired domestics. The markets are at a great distance from the capital, and held at long intervals; nor are they ever so well supplied as to admit of the requisite weekly stock being purchased at any individual place. Hence much trouble and inconvenience arose from the

necessity of dispatching messengers simultaneously to the various remote bazaars; and very great difficulty was experienced in preserving even the small number of live stock required for consumption in a country where all the surrounding meadows pertain alike to the crown, and where labour is so difficult to be procured.

Whilst porters are not to be obtained unless through a direct mandate from the king, the unwillingness of mule-owners to hire their cattle at the existing low rate, the displeasure and heart-burning of the authorities if a larger bribe were offered, the badness of the roads, and the steepness of the hills, all combine to render it a perplexing matter to dispense with this species of service. On the other hand, the greatest difficulty is experienced in providing for a permanent establishment of baggage-horses with their attendants, owing to the existing necessity of distributing them in small lots among the limited private grazing grounds in the vicinity, whence, when wanted, they are not to be obtained without infinite difficulty.

Every arrangement, however minute in detail, or trivial in importance, here demands a sacrifice of time and temper in a tedious and lengthy conference, which, in accordance with the custom of the country, must be carried on by the principal persons engaged in the transaction. No article is readily to be purchased, nor can any thing, how trifling soever, be accorded without the royal mandate, and when that

is at last obtained, the applicant would appear to be further than ever removed from the realization of his object. "It is done," is the mode of signifying that a request is granted, and the despot believes that to will is to accomplish; but whilst his commands are usually obeyed more to the letter than in the spirit in which they have been given, his public officers embrace every opportunity of consulting the interests of the privy purse, to the stranger's disadvantage.

In utter abhorrence of the country and its inhabitants, the Moslem servants who accompanied the Embassy from India all took their departure, willing rather to brave the dangers and difficulties of a long journey through the inhospitable deserts of the Adaïel, than to prolong a hateful sojourn in Abyssinia. One half of the number were murdered on the way down, and the places of all long remained empty. In any part of the world it would be difficult to find domestics inferior to their Christian successors. The consumption of *brundo*, or raw beef, and the sleeping off a surfeit which, in its progress towards stupor, exhilarated them to positive intoxication, formed the sum total of their services; yet every idle noisy vagabond who was in the receipt of four pieces of salt per mensem, with the promise of a new cloth annually, value three shillings and nine-pence sterling, held himself entitled to a permanent place before the drawing-room fire.

All stipulated for one day out of the thirty on which to drink *cosso*, and during the other twenty-nine, few ever stirred without grumbling. Honesty is not prominent among the Abyssinian virtues, and the lack of it sometimes redounded to the discredit of the master. A youth who was entrusted with a dollar to purchase sheep in the adjacent market, ingeniously contrived to smuggle into the flock, two for which he had not paid, being convinced that such an economical arrangement must prove highly agreeable to his employers, and thus lead to his own advancement. A hue and cry was raised on the discovery of the theft, and it required some time to persuade the magisterial authorities that the goat-herd had not been defrauded with the cognizance of the *bála-beit*[1].

An *áfero*, or janizary, had been specially appointed as a spy over the actions of the foreigners, and he rendered himself sufficiently obnoxious. Not satisfied with prying into the contents of boxes for the information of the purveyor-general, his immediate superior, he reported to the throne every the most minute circumstance that occurred; and besides originating several ingenious falsehoods, was so indefatigable in proclaiming us to be heretics, that he was shortly turned out of the house in disgrace, with an order never to show his face again.

Æthiopia derived her faith from the fountain of

[1] Master of the house.

Alexandria; but how is her Christianity disfigured by folly and superstition! The intolerance of the bigoted clergy, who rule with the iron hand of religious ascendancy, soon proclaimed the British worse than Pagans, for the non-observance of absurd fasts, and blasphemous doctrines; and the inhabitants, priest-ridden to a degree, received their cue of behaviour principally from their most despotic tyrant, the Church. Unquies, the Comus or Bishop of Shoa, was the most open and undisguised in his hostilities. Beset by evil thoughts at an early age, he imitated the example set by the celebrated Origenes; and so much is he respected by the monarch for his austerities and religious devotion, that His Majesty invariably speaks of him as "the strong monk." To him was traced a report that the Embassy were to be summarily expelled the country, in consequence of the non-observance of the fasts prescribed by the Æthiopic creed, and because a Great Lady, whose spies they were, was on her way from the sea-coast, with a large military force, to overturn the true religion, put the king to death, and assume possession of all Abyssinia.

On the festival of the Holy Virgin, the cemetery was thrown open, wherein rest the remains of Asfa Woosen, grandsire to Sáhela Selássie. It is a building adjoining the church of St. Mary; and being anxious to visit the mausoleum, I sent a message to the Lord Bishop, requesting permission to

do so. An insolent reply was returned, that since the English were in the habit of drinking coffee and smoking tobacco, both of which Mohammadan abominations are interdicted in Shoa upon religious grounds, we could not be admitted within the precincts of the hallowed edifice, as it would be polluted by the foot of a Gyptzi.

Nevertheless, we were permitted to attend Divine Service in the less inimical of the five churches of the capital. and offerings were made according to the custom of the country. The cathedral of St. Michael, distinguished above all its compeers by a sort of Chinese lantern on the apex, being invariably attended by the monarch, came first in order; and after wading through the miry kennels that form the avenues of access, our slippers were put off in accordance with Jewish prejudice, and giving them in charge of a servant to prevent their being stolen, we stepped over the threshold. The scowling eye of the bigoted and ignorant priest sparkled with a gleam of unrepressed satisfaction at the sight of a rich altar-cloth, glowing with silk and gold, which was now unfolded to his gaze; and a smile of delight played around the corners of his mouth, as the hard dollars rung in his avaricious palm.

A strange, though degrading and humiliating sight, rewarded the admittance we had thus gained to the circular interior of the sacred building. Coarse walls, only partially white-washed, rose in sombre earth but a few feet overhead, and the sus-

pended ostrich-egg—emblem of heathenish idolatry—almost touched our heads as we were ushered in succession to the seat of honour among the erudite. In a broad verandah, strewed throughout with dirty wet rushes, were crowded the blind, the halt, and the lame—an unwashed herd of sacred drones, muffled in the skin of the *agázin;* but beyond this group of turbaned monks and hireling beggars there was no congregation present.

The high-priest having proclaimed the munificence of the strangers, pronounced his solemn benediction. Then arose a burst of praise the most agonising and unearthly that ever resounded from dome dedicated to Christian worship. No deep mellow chant from the chorister—no soul-inspiring anthem, lifted the heart towards heaven. The Abyssinian cathedral rang alone to the excruciating jar of most unmitigated discord; and amid howling and screaming, each sightless orb was rolled in the socket, and every mutilated limb convulsed with disgusting vehemence. A certain revenue is attached to the performance of the duty; and for one poor measure of black barley bread, the hired lungs were taxed to extremity; but not the slightest attempt could be detected at music or modulation; and the dissonant chink of the timbrel was ably seconded by the cracked voice of the mercenary vocalist.

No liturgy followed the cessation of these hideous screams. The service was at an end, and the

Alaka, beckoning us to follow, led the way round the edifice. The walls were adorned with a few shields, and with miserable daubs representing the Madonna, the Holy Trinity *in cœlo*, the Father of Evil enveloped in flames, St. Peter and St. Paul, St. George and his green dragon, St. Demetrius vanquishing the lion, St. Tekla Haïmanót, St. Balaam and his ass, the Patron Saint, and every other saint in the Abyssinian calendar. But they boasted of no sculptured monument raised to departed worth or genius—no proud banner or trophy of heroic deeds—and no marble tablet to mark the quiet rest of the soldier, the statesman, or the scholar. In the holy of holies, which may be penetrated by none save the high-priest, is deposited the sacred *tabot*, or ark of the faith, consecrated at Gondar by the delegate of the Coptic patriarch; and around the veil that fell before this mysterious emblem, there hung in triumph four sporting pictures, from the pencil of Alken, which I had lately presented to His Majesty. They represented the great Leicestershire steeple-chase; and Dick Christian, with his head in a ditch, occupied by far the most prominent niche in the boasted cathedral of St. Michael!

CHAPTER III.

INTERVIEWS WITH THE KING.

Meanwhile, during the tedious fast observed by all classes in commemoration of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the king continued his residence at Machal-wans. On such occasions, His Majesty seeks the retirement of a country seat, and subsists upon raw fish, with vegetable oil and pepper. He is moreover averse to occupy the palace at Ankóber in the rainy season, when the elevated position of the isolated peak whereon it stands becomes a fearful mark for lightning, by which it is often struck; whilst huge masses of rock, loosened from the adjacent heights, come thundering into the valley, to the annihilation of every house that opposes their headlong course. The greater part of the court, however, continued to reside at the capital, and many were the demands made for presents by public officers of the state, amongst whom the Abyssinian habit of begging is sufficiently rife.

"There be pleasing things in my country which are not in yours," was the usual form of application, "and fine things in your country which are not found in mine." Well assured that no return

would be accepted for what they coveted, many had recourse to a species of refinement in the art of begging—the offer of block salt—and *ámole* in hand, they desired that the wares brought for sale might forthwith be exposed. Others tendered *mamálachas*, or trifling offerings, which, if once accepted, are considered to establish a claim to ready acquiescence in demands the most preposterous. Broken decanters were exhibited four times over by the domestics of the royal household, who, with tears in their eyes, entreated the price of the vessel as the only means of saving them from condign punishment. A shield was never defaced, nor a mule lost, that the delinquent did not refer himself to the Residency for the amount of the fine imposed; and one of the imperial footmen finally sought to place beyond all question his right to appropriate the very cloth upon the table. "I am the waiter in the great banqueting-hall," quoth the modest applicant, "and therefore I require this cloth as a dress."

Nor were even the royal family idle during this interval. Belete-Shatchau, "superior to all," a notable shrew lately divorced by the governor of Mans, and daughter of the queen by a former marriage—first in order—and then Worka Ferri, "golden fruit," another of the princesses royal—established their respective claims to articles of British manufacture, beads chintz and tinsel, by the presentation of potent hydromel in long-necked *barillés*, screened under wicker cases. Their example was

speedily followed by the illustrious Queen Besábesh, "thou hast increased," who begged to be informed what "delighting things" had been brought for *her* acceptance. But the report of this fact being immediately conveyed to the despotic ears, His Majesty lost not a moment in hinting "that it were desirable that all presents intended for the palace, should pass through his own hands."

It is not permitted to any subject of the realm to receive the smallest gift without submitting it forthwith to the Negoos, who either appropriates it with an "*Egzihér istikh!*" "May the Lord reward thee!" or accords permission to its retention; and concealment is sure to be visited, on discovery, with the severest punishment. Birroo, the son of a defunct nobleman, and the especially favourite page of the king, had been appointed *báldoraba*, or "introducer" to the Embassy, and in this dignified capacity had occasion to pay me almost daily visits with messages or commissions from the throne. Dilapidated matchlocks and swivels were to be restocked by the carpenters of the European escort, musical boxes to be repaired, garments were to be embroidered, or state umbrellas to be renewed; and every task had fortunately been achieved to the entire of the royal satisfaction. Before taking leave, the court favourite never failed to beg for something, and, being a pet with all, he never asked in vain; but it shortly became matter of public notoriety that he had been disgraced, and thrown into

durance, upon being detected in the act of burying the dollars and other presents that he had received.

The king commanded that a portion of the gifts which had led to this disaster should be returned to me, and I entreated pardon for the juvenile indiscretion of the page. "Birroo has been degraded," replied His Majesty, "but you must not be concerned thereat; for not only did he conceal from me all that you had given him, but, on being detected, swore falsely upon my own life that he had received much less than proved to be the case. I have dismissed him for ever from my presence, but his punishment is light when compared with the enormity of his transgression." The delinquent was, however, released upon a second representation, and restored to the possession of his gun, which had been forfeited; and although not reinstated in the royal confidence, he was subsequently appointed one of the *adrásh adáree*, or "keepers of the great room."

The first visit that we paid to Machal-wans was on the occasion of the king's indisposition. The high-priest, the chief eunuch, the purveyor-general, Wulásma Mohammad, and ten or twelve other of the courtiers, were in attendance; but they were dismissed after the customary compliments had passed; and His Majesty, reclining as usual upon the throne, thus proceeded, through the interpretation of the Reverend Dr. Krapf, to detail the long catalogue of his ailments.

"You may listen. I am not now so hale as in my younger days. Mine eyes trouble me day and night. I have pains in the neck. My teeth have grown long and become loose from fever, and my body has wasted away. Draw nigh whilst I recount the particulars of my late illness.

"I was returning from the expedition against the rebel Galla. I felt suddenly unwell. My head grew giddy. The earth turned round. It became blue under my feet. I fell from my mule. I believed myself dead. I was no longer sensible. My gun-men became afraid. They ran away to a man. The enemy made a show of attack. The army was in confusion. A governor rebelled. He sought to place his son upon the throne. The people dashed cold water over me. I recovered my senses. I was able to resume the command, and order was restored."

Priest-ridden and superstitious to the last degree, the monarch undertakes nothing without first consulting the superiors of the Church, and is deterred from change of residence, or from projected military expeditions, by their prophecies and pretended dreams, which are of course modelled according to the bribes that have been received from parties interested. On two occasions only is he said to have acted in opposition to the ecclesiastical counsel. The first cost him eight hundred warriors, who were cut up by the Galla during the passage of a morass, and the second the severe indisposition of which he still felt the effects.

The royal swoon, thus amusingly narrated, had been followed by the consignment to captivity for life in the dungeons of Górícho, of the traitor who had so prematurely sought the elevation of his son, and who was the proprietor of the Residency. Medicines administered to the king are invariably tasted by the physician in the presence of the patient, and on a phial of goulard lotion being now sent to the palace for external application to the despot's neck, it was returned in consequence of its being labelled "Poison." Of this he entertains the most undisguised dread, and it was not possible to overcome his apprehensions that a drop might find its way into his mouth during the hours of repose, and so cut short his reign.

But although living in perpetual alarm of assassination, and never moving abroad without weapons concealed under his garments, or unaccompanied by a numerous and trustworthy escort, His Majesty's fears did not extend to his British guests; and during our subsequent visits to Machal-wans, he hesitated not to trust us all about his person with loaded fire-arms, when none of his attendants were present. Many were the curious discussions held at these confidential interviews. Portraits were executed by the royal command — architectural plans prepared — and hunting expeditions or wars of extermination plotted against colonies of baboons and monkeys, the only quadrupeds of which the country can boast. Magazines

were exploded by means of detonating shells—seven-barrelled pistols and stick-guns for the first time introduced at court—and a liege subject of the realm was nearly shot dead by the royal hand, when clumsily making trial of an air cane, from which a wax bullet had previously been fired through the wicker table.

"My son," quoth the king, "I am old, and have but few years more to live. I have seen many strange things from your country, but none that surpass this engine, which without the aid of gunpowder can destroy men. Sorrow were it that I should have died and gone down to the grave before beholding and understanding so wonderful an invention. It is truly the work of a wise people who employ strong medicines!"

CHAPTER IV.

SPECIAL SUMMONS TO MACHAL-WANS.

HIS Majesty had more than once intimated an intention of holding consultation relative to his projected expedition on the termination of winter, and early one morning an express courier arrived to desire our immediate attendance at the palace. Blacksmiths and workers in silver were as usual plying their craft in the verandah, under the royal eye—artists were daubing red and yellow paint over the pages of the Psalter, or illuminating the lives of the saints with white angels and sable devils—saddles and warlike furniture were in course of repair—spears were being burnished—gun-locks cleaned—and musket barrels engraved with the despot's name; but the artificers were all summarily dismissed, and the king, rising from his seat in the portico, beckoned us to follow into the audience hall.

"*Gaita*," "master," he cautiously began, "there is yet another subject upon which I am desirous of taking counsel, and wherein I need your assistance. It is my intention shortly to undertake an expedition to the great lake in Guráguê. In it be many

islands which contain the treasures of my ancestors. There are jars filled with bracelets of solid gold. There are forty drums made of elephants' ears, and many holy arks pertaining unto ancient churches, besides seven hundred choice Æthiopic volumes, some of which have unfortunately been defaced by the animals called *ashkóko*[1]. Elephants abound on the borders. In the trees are found black leopards of a most ferocious nature, multiplying always among the branches, and never descending upon the earth; and the waters of the lake, which are smooth as glass, and without bottom, teem with monstrous *gomári*[2], and with fish of brilliant colours, red, yellow, green, and blue, such as have never before been seen.

"Moreover there are specifics against small-pox and other dreadful diseases. No resistance is to be anticipated, for the inhabitants, who are chiefly Christian monks, have often invited me. I must no longer delay to recover the lost wealth of my forefathers, and it is fitting that you, with the British officers who have come hither from a far country, should accompany me and construct boats. Hereof my people are ignorant, and your name as well as mine will therefore become great, and will live in the annals of this kingdom.

"From the summit of a lofty hill near Aiméllele, I have beheld through a telescope the lake and its

[1] Hyrax Abyssinicus.
[2] Hippopotamus amphibius.

tall trees, but the elephants came in numbers. I feared that my people would be destroyed. I ran, and they all ran with me. Now, what say you? What is your advice in this matter? Are you able to build boats?"

In furtherance of His Majesty's intentions, I caused models of skin punts, gun rafts, and a pontoon train, to be prepared upon the most approved design, with crews and ordnance complete, and advised that every requisite should be prepared at Ankóber whilst leisure served, in order that he might take the field with ample means at his disposal. The king expressed himself above all things pleased both with models and advice, which he declared to come from wise and expert soldiers; but he was still obviously undecided, and the fear of wild beasts and of the lone forest at length kicked the vibrating beam. The castle visions of glory mounted far out of reach, and his fickle ambition evaporated in a bluster of empty words—

"My people will weep at the carriage of such ponderous engines." "The preparations must be made on the banks of the Háwash, or on the borders of the Lake Zooai, where timber grows abundantly. A man of rank, one of the frontier governors, who resides near Aiméllele, should be summoned as guide to the expedition, and might then be consulted." But the presence of the great functionary was ever wanting—no further wish escaped the lips of the vacillating monarch—and

engrossed with the passing whim of the moment, the chivalrous project of the day had vanished.

So passed the dreary winter on. The arrival in the kingdom of Shoa of the many valuable presents brought by the Embassy, had not proved more agreeable to the traders from Gondar and Tigré who reside in Ankóber, than to the narrow-minded governor of Alio Amba. These men had been in the habit of selling glass-ware, cloths, and fire-arms to the king at a very considerable premium, and now did not fail to repeat and to improve the absurdities circulated by the mischievous Danákil regarding the foreign intruders. The Gypzis were pronounced eaters of serpents, mice, and other reptiles, and had come with the design of possessing themselves of the country by the aid of magic and medicine.

Great umbrage was taken at our practice of toasting the wretched half-baked dough which we received, under the denomination of bread, from the royal stores; and a soldier who carried a metallic pitcher to the stream, was roundly taxed with having used charms to poison the water, which was consequently condemned as unfit for use until purified by the blessing of the priest. Predictions of the impending fate of Abyssinia were derived from the fact of the foreigners employing instruments which read the stars; and the despot was repeatedly and earnestly warned to be upon his guard. But His Majesty cut short these insinua-

tions by threatening to extract the tongues of three or four of the maligners, and paid no attention whatever to the threat of excommunication extended to him by the fanatic clergy of Arámba, who had declared the ban of the Church to be the just punishment due for the admission into the empire "of red heretics, who ought carefully to be shunned, since they practised witchcraft, and by burning the king's bread threatened to bring a famine upon the land."

Taking their cue from the feelings of the people, the Shoan sorcerers gave out that Sähela Selássie was to be the last of the Æthiopian dynasty, descended from the house of Solomon, who should sit upon the throne of his forefathers, and that a foreign king would come by way of Alio Amba to usurp the dominion. It is amusing to trace the progress of these crafty insinuations among an ignorant and weak-minded people. In some of the northern provinces it was confidently asserted that the Sultán of the Mohammadans had already conquered Shoa, and that all the surrounding Moslem potentates were about to unite with him in a war of extermination against the Christians; whilst in others it was believed that an Alaka, or chief of the Gypts from Grand Caïro, had contrived to smuggle himself into the capital, carrying his sovereign in a box, and that after consulting the heavenly bodies until a favourable horoscope was presented, he stamped his foot upon the ground, which opened, and ten thou-

sand red soldiers, with beards flowing to their girdles, springing forth out of the chasm, placed the aforesaid monarch upon the throne. "Now," said the magicians, "will Theodorus arise according to the tradition, that he will come in the latter days of Æthiopia, and create a kingdom of Peace."

Theodorus was one of the emperors who reigned during the fifteenth century, and was canonized. It is recorded, that during the observance of his festival the queen-dowager had prepared a great entertainment, and the guests being all assembled, the heavens rained down a shower of fishes ready roasted. In the Æthiopic liturgy, the miracle is thus commemorated. "Peace be upon thee, King of the Agaazi nation, Theodorus, Son of the Lion; thy memory shall this day be celebrated with the slaughter of oxen and sheep, with which alone Zion Mogáss, thy mother, kept it not, for the clouds also dropped fishes." It is confidently believed that this saint will rise again from the dead, and reign a thousand years, during which period neither war, famine, nor discord, is to disturb the happiness of Abyssinia.

CHAPTER V.

TERMINATION OF WINTER.

In due process of time, spite of the denunciations of the fanatic priesthood, the silver and beef of the foreigners attracted the denizens of the adjacent villages, and we acquired a respectable retinue, such as an Abyssinian deems indispensable on all excursions abroad. A house better adequate to our wants had been purchased, and the bargain duly concluded according to the custom of the country by an oath on the life of the despot; but this was shortly annulled through the officious interference of the governor of the town, and it was not until the eleventh hour, when rain had begun to abate, that the Master of the Horse was prevailed upon to rent his newly-erected domicile. A fat ox having been slaughtered to drive out the Devil, it was handed over to the domestics, and wading through the blood which flowed over the threshold, we entered upon the premises in due form, and having hoisted the Union Jack over the new Residency, we quaffed with the burly landlord several horns of old hydromel for good luck. "Have you

a better house than this in your country?" he inquired exultingly: "I rather suspect not."

Ayto Melkoo, the Baldarás, or King's Master of the Horse, has under his charge the royal stud, saddles, and accoutrements, as also the workers in leather—is equerry in waiting, and conservator of pastures and meadows pertaining to the crown. He is moreover the greatest gourmand in the kingdom, and condescending to honour the denounced Christians with his company at the house-warming, did ample justice to the novel viands that were placed before him. He even submitted to the innovation of a silver fork, and politely partook of a salad, notwithstanding his firm conviction that the undressed vegetable would cause a return of ailments to which he had been a martyr in youth. The circulation of water for the ablution of fingers caused no little diversion on the removal of the cloth; but the marasquino which followed was unhesitatingly pronounced to be a nectar fit for princes alone. "Were but the Negoos aware with what good things the board of you English is spread," he exclaimed, smacking his lips after the last glass, "His Majesty would come and dine with you as often as you chose to invite him."

"But let me give you a lesson in politeness," added the old man, when, in reply to his abrupt intimation of intended departure, he was wished a "safe entrance to his house," in accordance with Abyssinian etiquette—"You should have said

'stay.'" "Such is not the fashion of the countries across the water," was Graham's reply: "every man is permitted to withdraw as he lists, and be happy in his own way." "Ay, ay," returned the guest; "but then if you had pressed me to tarry, I would at all events have stopped with you until the moon rose. Do you see?"

The fast of the Assumption having meanwhile terminated, the king announced his intention of removing to Angollála, his favourite place of residence; and thither, in defiance of excessively heavy rain, he set out on the day appointed by the household priests. "My children," said His Majesty at parting, "ye have travelled far on my account, and have no kinsman saving myself. My people are bad people, and I am sorry thereat. They bring me daily all manner of reports regarding yourselves and your evil intentions. The rumours have doubtless reached your ears, but ye must not suppose that Sáhela Selássie believes one of them. Ye are my friends, and I will deal with you accordingly. I will that ye come shortly to Debra Berhán and witness the great annual review at the feast of Máskal. Ayto Wolda Hána shall conduct you."

But the important functionary thus selected was of all others arrayed in the most open hostility, and, unlike the majority of his avaricious colleagues, his enmity had been proof against overtures and advances. "I am a lone man," he invariably replied, "and have neither wife nor child. Grey

hairs have come out on me. I am the son of sixty years. I want nothing in this world but the favour of the king." To judge from appearances, the pinnacle of his loyal ambition had already been attained. Governor of Ankóber, and president of the *mádi beit*, or kitchen, wherein are prepared hydromel, pepper soup, and sour beer—comptroller of all the royal porters and of the household slaves, who are the hewers of wood and the carriers of water, who grind, bake, express oil, and manufacture candles—receiver-general into the imperial magazines of all tribute in cotton, grain, thread, sheep, and poultry—and charged with the superintendence, the erection, and the repair of all public buildings throughout the realm, as well as with the arrangement of the interior economy of the capital—Ayto Wolda Hána can have little left to desire; and so conscientiously does he acquit himself of these manifold onerous duties, that it is affirmed his royal master could scarcely exist without him.

A visible diminution in the male population of Ankóber follows the departure of the monarch to either of his more distant places of residence. During his absence the administration of affairs devolves chiefly upon Ayto Kidána Wold, who may be termed the viceroy. In charge of the secret police and magisterial department, he adjusts all private differences, watches over the public safety, and besides ministering daily to the wants of all consigned to him, gives annually three great entertain-

ments at the expense of the crown. He has been honoured with the hand of Woïzoro Askuala Work, sister to the queen-dowager, and as the receipt of the promised invitation to Debra Berhán required an intimation of intended departure, it afforded me a long sought opportunity of making the acquaintance of this stately dame. Seated in the utmost of Abyssinian pomp, and surrounded by a goodly train of slaves, pages, and handmaidens, she received us with the greatest affability, and in the temporary absence of her lord, expressed the highest gratification at the attention of our visit, although unable to accept the presents that I offered, from an apprehension of the royal displeasure.

But conversation during a morning call is here little more than a string of the most earnest and pathetic inquiries respecting one's own health, and that of one's wife, relatives, and children. Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be

invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.

Should the encounter take place twenty or even a hundred times during one and the same day, a repetition of the ceremony is enforced, and for each progressive stage of morning, noon, evening, and night, there exists a distinct set of phrases, which, from the never-ending repetition, are grating and wearisome. Passengers stand in the lane, denude their shoulders, and roar out salutations intended for the inmates of huts some hundred yards from the hedge. The slumberer is started from sleep by the dinning "How do ye do?" from some gentleman passing ere the day has dawned to his country residence; and from morning until even-tide, one's ears are assailed by a most harassing tissue of polite inquiries from every individual of whatever rank, who may think proper to pass himself off as an acquaintance.

CHAPTER VI.

DEBRA BERHÁN, THE HILL OF GLORY.

IN Shoa the preliminaries of a journey are replete with noise, inconvenience, and confusion. Friends come to "see you off," as an indispensable piece of etiquette, and the lounging townspeople, who have at no time much business of their own, flock to assist the traveller by filling the court-yard, choking the door-way, and amusing themselves by canvassing the property packed. Should rain be falling, which is too frequently the case, the rabble take shelter inside the house, subject every article within their reach to the pollution of greasy paws, leave the carpet an inch thick in mire, and, unless by dint of shoving and elbowing, debar all egress to the lawful proprietor.

It was in the midst of attentions such as these on the part of the idlers of Ankóber, on a raw, cold, foggy morning in September—the last of the Æthiopic year—that we took the road to Debra Berhán. The sun was already high when the sure-footed mules were mounted, and as the retiring mist scudded over the face of the mountains, many were the bold beauties revealed. Cascades tumbled down

the stupendous range on the one hand, amid snug houses and tufted knolls, and on the other, at the foot of perpendicular crags thundered the river Airára. On its bank stands the only piece of machinery in the kingdom—a rude watermill, constructed by an Albanian visiter; but the intolerant and ignorant priesthood pronouncing the revolution of the wheel to be the work of devils and genii, its use was interdicted after three days, and it has since remained silent.

Beyond the ford of the foaming torrent the road becomes extremely rough, steep, and difficult. The first traveller had been unable to breast the mountain side outright; and his zigzag route remains untouched by the hand of the pioneer. The craggy rock must be surmounted, and the narrow and slippery channel be still threaded with the same risk as when the first bold foot was planted on the serrated ridge; and the torrent of centuries, whilst indenting the furrow yet deeper, has added the impediment of slimy residuum.

The range whereof the Chaka forms a part divides the streams that flow into the Nile, from those which are tributary to the Háwash; and the ascent above Ankóber being not less than two thousand feet, the difference in temperature on the summit was fully perceptible. Half an hour was occupied in the scramble to a crumbling basaltic pillar styled "*Koom dingai*," "the standing stone," which very aptly transfers its name to this most indifferent pass

to the new capital of Shoa. Mamrat still towered overhead full three or four thousand feet, making its total height above the level of the sea at least thirteen thousand; yet is snow a stranger to its cloud-capped summit, and indeed to the language of all Amnára, south of the cold mountains of Simien.

It is from June to September that old Father Nilus carries plenty into "the land of marvels"—and rolling on to its mouths in solitary grandeur, without receiving a single tributary in its long course of thirteen hundred and fifty nautical miles below the junction of the Tacazzé, it may fairly be stated that Abyssinia holds in her Christian hands the inexhaustible riches of Egypt. Hatzé Tekla Haïmanót the Great, had therefore reason on his side when, in the beginning of the twelfth century, he wrote under the style of "Son of the King of the Church of Æthiop, to the Pacha and the Lords Commanders of the Militia at Grand Caïro, desiring attention to the fact that in himself for the time being was vested power to render the Nile an instrument of vengeance for overt acts of hostility—the Almighty having given into his hands its fountains, its passage, and its increase, and thus entrusted him with power to make the river work good or evil."

Among the numberless fictions recorded of this emperor, it is said that when he was about to relinquish the cares of government in order to retire to

a cloister, he divided his countless wealth with his feet into two parts, the one designed as an offering to the Church, the other to be distributed in alms among the poor: and both heaps, although mountain high, were, on being weighed, found exactly equal. Lalíbela, one of his successors, is believed to have attempted the diversion to the Indian Ocean and to the Lake Zooai, of all those principal tributaries to the Nile which take their source in the highest table land. The measure was in resentment for the persecutions exercised towards the Christians in Egypt after the Saracen conquest, and the monarch was only induced to relinquish his gigantic project by the earnest remonstrance of the monks, who strongly urged the impolicy of fertilizing the arid Moslem countries that intervene betwixt the mountains and the sea.

On the summit of the Cháka commences an uninterrupted terrace, stretching hundreds of miles to the southward, through the fair territories of the Galla. Glimpses of blue sky, of a brightness unseen for months, now gave happy presage of coming fine weather, and a cold bracing breeze from the eastward announced the termination of the protracted season of rain. The country had assumed the uninteresting character inseparable from elevated downs—rich swampy meadows, clothed with camomile, clover, and trefoil, and covered with oxen, horses, and sheep, being intersected by gentle undulations of moor-land, with occasional oviform

hills. Bare-banked rills, streaming through the lower tracts, succeed each other in quick succession, and drain the table-land to the sources of the Beréza; whilst the great extent of ground under cultivation, waving crops of wheat, beans, and barley, with independent farm-houses scattered over the face of the landscape, proclaim a government which cannot be of a very bad description, and regions long exempt from the presence of an inimical power.

Across the Toro Mesk, the principal streamlet that intersects the road, and the sources of which are visible at a great distance to the north-east, is a rude pile of stones bearing the dignified appellation of "the King's Bridge." Johannes, the Armenian architect, received the hand of a high-born dame in reward of his skill, and by no foot save that of the despot, is the barred entrance ever passed. Two other bridges, upon the same primitive principle, have since been constructed over nameless but rapid rivulets, and if not very durable, they serve greatly to facilitate the royal progress at periods when the country is inundated.

During the reign of the sire and grandsire of the present monarch, the entire tract between Ankóber and Debra Berhán was in the hands of the heathen Galla; and Tenna Káloo, the last daring chieftain who disputed its possession, has left in the minds of the present generation the recollection of the prowess in arms that he evinced to their fathers, numbers of whom fell in the strife. Not a tree, nor even a

shrub higher than the Abyssinian thistle, is to be seen, save here and there a solitary "*cosso*," whose venerable boughs, the witnesses of idolatrous rites, mark the ancient site of villages now gone to decay. Flourishing Christian hamlets have risen in their stead; yet the visible population is small, and the long naked sweeping plains, silent and lonesome, present a stern and melancholy appearance, which the absence of groves and hedges and singing birds tends materially to heighten. The vulture and the eagle are alone seen wheeling above the green cliffs, or a solitary buzzard soaring in quest of his prey over the great sheets of cultivation. Shepherds, wearing high conical hempen caps, lay ensconced, with their large shaggy dogs, under the shelter of knolls and caves; and in some few of the fields, where last year's crops were yet unhoused, or the land remained untilled, the peasantry pursued their industrious occupation.

At length the monotonous view opened over a wide plateau sloping gently to the west. The blue peaks of Sallála Moogher, beyond which flows the infant Nile, rose faintly in the distance, and the intervening country, still destitute of wood, was traversed by broad, broken, precipitous ravines. On a hill to the northward is visible the extensive market-place of Bool Worki, "the cave of gold," a great mart for horses, mules, and woollen cloths, which, with grain, asses, and horned cattle, are brought every Saturday by the adjacent Galla tribes,

and, when sold, pay a heavy duty to the crown. To account for the name of the place, there is a tradition extant, that in days of yore, many holy arks with vast quantities of the purest gold were deposited by the emperors of Æthiopia in a certain deep cave having a bottomless lake interposed to save them from the grasp of the avaricious. Its waters form the abode of a legion of evil spirits, whose Alaka gratuitously exhibited himself one market-day, mounted upon an ambling mule loaded with massive golden trappings, and attended by a black cat wearing about its neck a bell of the same costly metal—a sight quite sufficient to deter intrusion on the part of the curious.

A cluster of white-roofed houses, straggling beyond the walled palace and the church of the Holy Trinity—long indistinctly visible—now rose rapidly to view; and a small eminence having been ascended, the goal was presently attained. As we passed the royal lodge, a page mounted on one of the king's horses rode forth to reconnoitre, and, taking a hasty glance, galloped off to make his report. The customary announcement through an Afero, who has always access to the palace, elicited a pair of monstrous Galla rams, which were thrust into observation while the message which follows—one strictly in accordance with Abyssinian etiquette—was delivered with shoulders bare by him to whom it had been confided:—"Are you well? Are you well? Are you well? Have you been quite well since our last

interview? Are you all well? Have my children had a good journey? Have they entered in safety? My love amounts to heaven and earth; therefore the king said, they might eat these sheep."

Awnings, wrought of goats' hair, and resembling the black tents of Kedar, had meanwhile been erected for us on the green-sward, and we had no sooner taken up our quarters than there came, by a succession of maids of honour, bread in wicker baskets, old hydromel in coloured decanters, pots of honey, and compliments in profusion from the queen. Many of the courtiers visited us in the evening, too evidently fresh from the royal banquet, which is daily spread in the great hall, and from which few ever rise in a state of sobriety—their amount of friendship professed, and the modicum of flattery that they bestowed, being in the exact ratio of the potations swallowed during their revel. Glimmering lights soon illumined the straggling hamlet—dancing and singing occupied both sexes of the inhabitants—and with almost as much pomp and ceremony as in more civilised lands, the departed year was consigned to its last long resting-place in the relentless tomb of Time.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROYAL SLAVE DEPÔT.

No royal residence can be conceived more desolate and less princely than the palace at Debra Berhán, "the Hill of Glory." Crumbling walls of loose uncemented stone, patched in their various breaches and dilapidations by splintered palisades, surround a vast assemblage of wattle and dab edifices, of various shapes and dimensions, which are clumped together in separate court-yards, without any regard to appearance. Six rude gateways on the southern side conduct through as many miry enclosures, lined with troops, and crowded with herds, flocks, and applicants for justice. A paddock, covered with bright green turf, extends in front of the chamber of audience. Hoary junipers stretch their moss-grown branches fantastically over the lawn; and at the further extremity of the enclosure rise the mouldering remains of the palace of Zára Yácoob.

This monarch, who was the founder of Debra Berhán, is reputed to have been endowed with the wisdom of Solomon, his great ancestor: and the vestiges that remain of his abode, certainly exhibit

an order of architecture far superior to that of the present degenerate day. It has been composed of large blocks of hewn, though unsculptured, stone; but, in common with every other boasted edifice erected in the height of Æthiopic splendour, it perished during the reign of Nebla Dengel, by the hand of the destroyer Graan. Hatzé Zára Yácoob first attached capital punishment to the continuance of idolatry. He instituted an inquisition, and persecuted every one who paid adoration to the cow and serpent. Amongst others who underwent execution were two of his own sons-in-law; and he finally issued a proclamation, confiscating the lands of those who should thenceforth neglect to carry on the right arm an amulet inscribed with the words, "I have renounced the Devil and all his works for Christ Jesus our Lord."

Tradition asserts that "the Hill of Glory," now barren of trees, was in days of yore thickly covered with forest, through which ran a single path. In the beginning of the fifteenth century the founder, who was also styled Constantine, fled into its depths before an invasion of the Adaïel, and becoming bewildered in the intricacies, hurried hither and thither, exclaiming in his dilemma, "*Ber eza, ber eza?*" "Where is the road?" Suddenly there shone forth over the eminence a great halo of light from heaven, which served him as a beacon by which to escape out of the labyrinth. In some of the adjacent swamps are to be seen the ancient remains of

decomposed timber, and a few venerable junipers still survive within the palace enclosure; but beyond these monuments of antiquity the truth of the legend rests solely on the name of the river Beréza, a serpentine stream winding round the foot of the hill, and forming one of the principal sources of the Blue Nile.

Tegulet, "the city of the wolves," the capital of all Abyssinia in her brighter days, and a spot untrodden by European foot since the visit of Father Alvarez, forms a conspicuous feature in the view presented from the village. Occupying a commanding promontory, round which flows the river Salácha, it is environed by singular bluffs; and one natural fissure, visible from a great distance, affords the only practicable ascent to the impregnable fortress, upon which the Galla, in the meridian of their power, were unable to make the slightest impression during reiterated attempts to carry it by storm. The Alaka of Tegulet is superior also of the celebrated shrine of Séna Márkos, a saint of the days of Tekla Haïmanót. The monastery, named after its founder, occupies a similar inaccessible fastness, overlooking a part of the valley of the Nile, and the whole of the north and west of Shoa, as far as the chain of lofty mountains which here form the bulwark of the Christian kingdom.

The view from the village of Etteghe, near Tegulet, is so extensive that it has given rise to a proverb, "From Etteghe is the Echegue or Grand

Prior of the Monks, to be seen at Gondar." Forty-four rivulets, corresponding in number with the churches of that city, are said to pay tribute through this district to the Adabai, which sends its waters down the Jumma to the Nile; their short course of little more than one hundred and fifty miles, involving so rapid a declination to the westward, that nearly all have cataracts in some part, and are consequently destitute of finny inhabitants. The immediate environs of Tegulet are intersected by the beds of rapid torrents, having high precipitous banks, which afford few accessible roads, whether to man or beast—a fact to which this portion of Shoa may be concluded to have owed its security during the inpourings of heathen and Mohammadan hordes. Tegulet-wat, "the devouring depths," a fathomless abyss yawning on the banks of one of these streams, and described as the habitation of demons, is believed by the superstitious to communicate with the "great water." It proved the grave of numerous Christian warriors, who, during the bloody contest with the Adaïel, tumbled unexpectedly into its dark bosom, and were heard of no more.

It was at the close of the fifteenth century that Mafoodi, the bigoted king of Hurrur, unfurling the green banner of the Prophet, commenced those devastating inroads upon the frontiers of Shoa, which finally led to the dismemberment of the Æthiopic empire, and proved the greatest calamity that has

ever befallen the country. Under a vow that he would annually spend the forty days of Lent among the Abyssinian infidels, he overran Efát and Fátigar when the people, weakened by rigorous fasting, were less capable of bearing arms—burned churches and monasteries, slew without mercy every male who fell in his way, and driving off the women and children, sold some into foreign slavery, and presented others to the Sheriffe of Mecca. Alexander, the then reigning emperor, was assassinated at Tegulet by Za Selássie, commander-in-chief of the royal body-guard, who had been bought over by Mafoodi. The eyeballs of the regicide were seared with a red hot iron; his hands and feet were chopped off; and he was stoned to death amid the curses and execrations of the populace, after he had been paraded on an ass in this mutilated condition throughout Shoa and Amhára

Debra Berhán is one of the principal depôts for the numerous royal slaves, the possession of whom casts the foulest blot on the character of the Christian monarch. A strange clatter, and a Babel-like mixture of tongues, greets the ear of the visiter, and the features of many races, and of many nations, are distinctly visible among the crowd that throngs the gate, although all are alike enveloped in the disguising costume of Abyssinia.

The huge black Shankela, with blubber lip and bloodshot eye, is resting for a moment against the

broken wall, and stretching a brawny limb which might have supported the bully Hercules himself. Grinning from ear to ear as his burly neighbour sports some savage joke in licence unrestrained, he seizes with a three-horse power his bundle of split wood, which two Amhára could with difficulty raise, and poising it like a feather upon his woolly head, walks away in all the vigour of a young giant.

With his own approving eye the monarch has selected this specimen from a lot of powerful negroes captured beyond the Nile, and fifteen silver crowns must not be lightly squandered even by the great sovereign of Southern Abyssinia. Rations are well supplied to support his sinewy form, and unless on a cold raw day, when the soaking rain has penetrated every thread of his black blanket, and his shivering frame brings vividly to mind the difference of climate, the enslaved pagan, in his present condition, as hewer in the royal forests, enjoys himself fully as well as if ranging in savage liberty over his own free country of the sun.

Not so the scowling Galla who follows in his rear. The spirit of roving independence is still unsubdued in his fiery eye; and the slender figure and the bent leg proclaim the wild rider of the grassy plain. Heavy and heartbroken he plods along under a burthen to which his strength is quite inadequate; and the groan escapes from his lips as the bitter thoughts enter his soul of the disgraceful lash of

the task-master, that perhaps awaits his return, and he remembers the lost wife and little ones whom he has for ever left on the distant savannahs of the Háwash.

Issuing from the gateway under the authority of a bloated eunuch, a numerous flock of brown damsels take their way to the river. Heavy earthen jars are slung over their slender backs, and the light forms of the unfortunates are little concealed by their torn and scanty attire. These are newly purchased Christians from the last Gurágué caravan, and the language of the Ambára is still strange to their ear. Garlands of the yellow buttercup deck the plaited raven locks of each captive maid, and a plaintive song is chanted in soft mellow notes to beguile the hours of toil. But the lines of slavery have already found place among their youthful features, which possess beauty unknown to those of their oppressors. The low chorus swelling mournful and piteous from the band, has recalled thoughts of home and liberty to the joyless breast; and the sad tear is brushed from the long dark eye-lash at the recollection of happier hours spent in their own sweet land of spices.

Following close behind comes a group of favoured dames of a certain age, from whose minds time has effaced all remembrance of country and of kindred. Exalted to the post of mistresses of the royal brewery, and decked out like the first ladies of the land, in flowing garments resplendent with crimson

stripes, they have little reason to wish for a change of condition. Bars and studs of solid silver load their perforated ears, and ponderous pewter bangles encircle each wrist and ankle. Their wigs, arranged according to the most becoming fashion, in minute rows of tiny curls, glisten under a coat of butter, and their fat cheeks, plastered with grease and red pigment, are calculated to strike respect into the heart of the most indifferent beholder. Their unceasing clack and clatter tell the tale of the wonted freedom of female tongue, but the small jar with the green branch protruding from the narrow neck, is strapped over the breast with the thong of slavery; and the attending eunuch, with his long thin wand —an emblem of his own withered person—proclaims the fact that the ladies cannot roam at pleasure over the verdant mead, but must restrict themselves in the beaten path according to the cracked voice of their driver.

Seated upon a gaily caparisoned mule, amidst the jingling of bells and brass ornaments, the general of the gun-men proceeds in state across the green parade. He is attired in the richest garments that the land can produce. A glaring cloth of red silk is wound about his brow, a silver sword decorates his right side, and fifty robed followers attend his every behest. But he too is a slave, as was his father before him, and as his son will be after him. All the bones and sinews of his attendants are the purchased property of the monarch, and it is only

by the imperial will and pleasure, which may be changed to-morrow, that he is now ambling in chintz and satin to dine at the royal board, instead of holding place in the foremost group, with a black blanket over his shoulder, and a load of wood upon his head for fuel in the royal kitchen.

Here comes a demure damsel from the harem, disfigured by all the foul garments and native filth which delight the inhabitant of Shoa. It is Wuletta Georgis. one of Her Majesty's confidential slaves, and she is revolving in her mind, how, in executing her mistress's commission, she can contrive to promote her own interests. Born and bred in the palace, the Abigail is ordinarily treated with kindness, unless the fracture of a brittle decanter, or the unbidden attack upon some savoury dish, involve a little wholesome correction. Unlike the philosophical maid in Rasselas, who had broken the porcelain cup, she needs pecuniary aid, and thus is her request sobbed out: "Only one dollar to replace the queen's looking-glass, and may God reward you!" But the sob is evidently assumed for the occasion, and a sly glance may be detected in the corner of her cunning eye, to observe the effect of her false appeal. The full price of the fractured mirror has already been received from three several individuals, and her mistress will assuredly confiscate the profits; but the tenure of property during even one short half hour possesses charms irresistible, and the poor girl falls prostrate

on the ground as the silver is dropped into her unwashed fingers.

A last group is straggling through the gateway. The aged and the infirm, who can still perform a light task, have just received their daily dole from the royal storehouse at the niggard hand of the pampered steward. The vigour of their youth has been expended in the service of the despot, and now, in the evening of life, their original scanty pittance is yet further reduced. A wistful glance is cast upon the handful of raw barley, which must content them for the day. Hunger and destitution are painfully pourtrayed in the deep furrows of each withered face, and the shrunken limb totters as the keen wind whistles through the wet folds of the tattered goat-skin girdle, which reaches barely to the knee. No fostering hand awaits their return to the cheerless hut, to minister in kindness to the necessities of age; and the last closing scene will drop a welcome curtain of repose over sinews ground by indigence and toil, during half a century of hopeless bondage.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

New Year's Day, which fell on the 10th of September, was, according to the Abyssinian calendar, the eighteen hundred and thirty-fourth since the nativity of Christ, and it was celebrated with much rejoicing and festivity. Betimes in the morning came a summons to the presence of the Negoos, who, seated in the portico of the audience chamber, was enjoying the genial warmth of the rising sun. The interior of the hall was strewed throughout with newly-plucked rushes, and under a large iron chafing-dish, with a cheerful wood-fire, basked a whole host of sleek cats in couples—a portion of the dower received with the fair daughter of the Galla Queen of Moolo Fálada.

The king was particularly affable, and in the highest spirits. His hand having been extended to each of us in turn, with the usual inquiries relative to our "safe entrance," the congratulations of the season were offered to His Majesty, according to the customary form: "As the departed year of St. Matthew has closed happily upon your auspicious reign, so also may the coming year of St.

Mark! May God prolong your days, and continue the throne in the line of your ancestors unto your children's children, to the end of time! May He extend the boundaries of your dominions, and cause your spear to prevail over the lance of the enemy! May He endow you with wisdom to judge your subjects aright, and move your heart unto clemency; and may He cause high and low alike to understand and to appreciate the equitable sway of the Father, whom Heaven has appointed to rule over them!"

Elaborate models of a domed palace, completely furnished, and an English saddle and bridle, were next presented, and received with every manifestation of delight, coupled with a prayer from the royal lips that "God might glorify the donor." A long and minute scrutiny led to an infinity of questions, not easily answered, as to how the shield was to be slung to the pommel, and why the entire foot, instead of the great toe only, should be inserted in the stirrup? "The sun in different countries shines with more or less brilliancy," exclaimed His Majesty, with truly royal eloquence, as he concluded the examination—"the birds and the beasts are different, and so are the plants. I am fond of new inventions, if it be only to look at them, and although they should prove on trial to be inferior to old ones."

Abd el Yonag, the chief of the Hurrur slave-merchants, was seated, rosary in hand, during this conversation, and in his weather-beaten countenance

were displayed all the cunning lineaments of the petty retailer in small wares, curiously contrasted with the sagacity of the extensive dealer in politics, who had succeeded in obtaining an accurate measure of the monarch's foot. The knave too protested to have seen the world, and gave out that with his own grey eyes he had beheld the glories of Britain's eastern possessions.

To support his widely circulated character for universal knowledge, the Moslem miscreant now seized between his bony fingers two handsome pieces of sprigged muslin, fresh from the looms of Manchester, which I had presented for Queen Besábesh, and throwing them contemptuously towards the corner of the throne, muttered betwixt his lips the word "Bombay."

"What's that, what do you say?" cried the king, in his usual abrupt manner.

"May it please your Majesty," returned the turbaned traveller, to our great diversion, "'tis the name of this cloth—it is called Bombay."

But an opportunity presently occurred of laughing at the beard of the irreverent pedlar, nor was it suffered to pass unheeded. The despot exhibited a silver sword scabbard, which had been curiously enamelled to represent one of the scaly inhabitants of the deep, and it was acknowledged *nemine contradicente* that the artist had succeeded in producing a highly creditable resemblance to a fish. "A fish," quoth the man of Hurrur, "what is that?" Even

the monarch smiled when the explanation was rendered. "Fishes live in the great sea between Abyssinia and Bombay, and he whose eyes have not suffered under Oubié's searing-irons, might behold numbers every day of the voyage." "*Istigh-far-allah*," "Heaven defend me," growled the discomfited Wurj, as he slunk into a corner--" 'Tis passing strange that Abd el Yonag should have never seen the wild beast of the water."

Attended by the dwarf father confessor, and holding deep consultation with several of the household priests, the king presently led the way through the secret door on the north-eastern side of the palace enclosure. Two umbrellas of crimson velvet, surmounted by silver globes and crosses—his never-failing attendants on all occasions of state—were supported by sturdy slaves, and twelve richly caparisoned steeds, representing the months of the year, were led by the royal grooms. A numerous and motley retinue of dismounted cavaliers followed, and on reaching the meadow, the brows both of monarch and subject were bound by the monks with green fillets of a wiry grass, styled "*enkotátach*," whence the festival takes its appellation.

Unlike the rugged mountains of Ankóber, which can alone be traversed by the sure-footed mule, the country around Debra Berhán is well adapted for the equestrian, and the bright azure of the sky, mottled by fleecy clouds, the fresh verdure of the

turf, and the elasticity of the air, all lent their aid to the coming tournament. Armed with a slender staff, the king mounted his charger, and bounding over the green-sward, opened the sports of the day. Groups of wild savages were instantly to be seen scouring in every direction, engaged in the *gombéza*, or joust, but His Majesty in flaunting striped robes shone conspicuous. Well mounted, a fearless horseman, and admirably skilled in the use of the spear, he had on no previous occasion been seen to so great advantage as during his participation in the warlike exercises of the new year—now pursuing, and now in turn pursued by the warrior whom he had honoured by selection as his antagonist in the tilt.

"Guebroo is sick," quoth the monarch, the moment this display was over; "he has received a severe wound in the head during a skirmish with the rebel Galla, and I am desirous that you should now visit him, taking with you the medicine for putrid sores!"

Ayto Berkie, the governor of Bulga, volunteered his escort to Dalúti, the abode of his invalid brother. Crossing the serpentine Beréza, the road led through swampy meadows, and over little cultivated knolls destitute of either tree or shrub, towards Angollála, which, after a gallop of seven miles, opened in the distance. On the summit of a tabular eminence rose the king's two-storied palace, above churches and conical houses; and five dis-

tinct knolls, forming an arc in the intermediate and otherwise level landscape, were severally crowned by the abodes of favourite courtiers—that on the extreme right, embowered in luxuriant trees, pertaining to Ayto Guebroo, governor of Mentshar.

Ascending the tumulus by a steep and stony path, and passing through a muddy court-yard, we reached to the abode of the great man. Surrounded by mournful attendants, he reclined on an *alga* before a fierce fire, his right eye screened by a shade of blue calico, and his comely partner sobbing violently at his feet The Gillé and Loomi Galla, bordering on the ancient province of "Fátigar," having revolted, the warrior had taken the field with his contingent, and becoming opposed to a rebel in hand to hand combat, had received the first spear on his buckler, which was now ostentatiously displayed. The horse of his adversary fell under a well-directed lance, and the dismounted pagan sued for quarter; obtaining which, he treacherously launched his remaining shaft, which had cleft the forehead, and passed through the corner of the eye, although without destroying the vision.

The patient having pledged himself to submit to the prescribed treatment, which few in Abyssinia will do, an operation was successfully performed by Dr Kirk. Drying her tears, the hostess had meanwhile slaughtered a ram, and made extensive preparations for a repast. Piles of thin *teff* cakes, which loaded the low wicker table, were flanked by

decanters of mawkish old honey wine; bowls of pepper porridge smoked at the place appointed for each guest, and lumps of raw meat were in profusion; nor was it without infinite surprise that the hospitable entertainers and their domestics beheld the chops submitted in the first instance to the influence of the hot embers. "Do all of your nation thus burn their meat?" inquired the lady, after long and attentive observation: "I was told that such was the case, and that you burnt the king's bread too, but could never have believed it."

No small difficulty was experienced by the despot in comprehending how an eye could be restored by the use of the knife; but His Majesty was at a still greater loss to understand by what means a subject had been cured, whilst himself remained in partial blindness. Ayto Kátama was present at this observation, and turning to one of the party, he whispered, "You must not suppose that the Negoos is blind of that eye: may Sáhela Selássie die, he sees better with it than with the other!" Like Æsop of old, who was once a bondsman, the general of the body-guard still retained the grovelling spirit of slavery, varnished with the address of the artful courtier; and he thus invariably followed the advice given to Solon by the hunchback author of the Fables, "that we should either not come near crowned heads at all, or speak those things only that will prove agreeable to them."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALLS OF THE BERÉZA.

HUNTING expeditions filled up the leisure hours of the busy monarch. Standing on the verge of the deep ravine by which the now deserted fastness of Tegulet is insulated from the plain of Debra Berhán, it was His Majesty's diversion to project stone balls from his rifle at the hyænas basking upon huge fragments of fallen rock, which form caverns one thousand feet below, and choke the bed of the pathless chasm. Then the steps of the royal cavalcade would be directed to the valley of the Beréza, where "Satan's horses," in the shape of gigantic adjutants, were striding over the plain on their long stilt-like legs, with well-filled pouches dangling beneath their bills. Here, seated upon the green turf, the Negoos awaited the report of his scouts. Whilst turning the corner of the numerous abrupt eminences, his ears were ever saluted by loud cries of "*Abiet! Abiet!*" from the mouth of many a petitioner, and a very respectable body of plaintiffs and defendants were continually in attendance.

Judgment was calmly delivered until the arrival

of some breathless horseman with intelligence of the discovery of a colony of baboons, would arrest the proceedings of the sylvan court. "Sáhela Selássie ye moot?" inquired the sporting monarch on one of these occasions, adjuring the informant by his own illustrious life; "are they well surrounded?" "May Sáhela Selássie die if they be not," responded the slave, as he bowed his head to the dust; "hundreds graze in yonder corn-field." "Then by the death of Woosen Suggud they shall be slain," was the rejoinder, as His Majesty galloped towards the spot, followed by a train of attendants carrying every rifle and fowling-piece of which the imperial armoury could boast.

On the verge of the deep valley we presently descried a countless pig-faced army, laying waste the rising crops. Lusty veterans, muffled in long flowing manes, strutted consequentially among the ladies; and others, squatted upon their hunkers, with many a ghastly grin displayed their white teeth whilst hunting down the vermin that infested their rough shaggy coats. Casting aside his chequered robe, the king, with all the ardour of a schoolboy, dashed into the middle of the amazed group, and under a running fire from himself and courtiers, the field was presently strewed with slain and wounded. Mangled wretches were now to be seen endeavouring to reach the precipitous chasm of the Beréza, whose white foaming waters were thundering below, whilst the grimacing survivors, far out of danger,

whooped in echoes amid the bush-grown clefts, to reassemble the discomfited forces.

Return from this brilliant victory was celebrated by the war-chorus, until the appearance of an *erkoom* waddling over the ploughed land, again proved the signal for general pursuit. This gigantic and deformed bird is of the genus Hornbill, and an abrupt unmeaning excrescence above his huge jagged forceps, imparts a fancied resemblance to the slaves of the king, who carry water-jars upon their heads, which has dignified him with the title of "Abba Gumbo," "the Father of the Pitcher." It has blue wattles, which, when the bird is worried, become inflamed like those of the turkey-cock; and from the fact of its always constructing the door of its nest to the eastward, the Abyssinians assert that it will never build out of sight of a church.

The plumage throughout is to appearance of a sooty black; but the expansion of the wings displays an assemblage of snowy quills which form the pride of the warrior who has slain his enemy in battle. Mules were abandoned with one accord; and under the encouraging gaze of the despot, the courtiers, springing into their high-peaked saddles, scoured after the devoted quarry. Weary with its long flight, the heavy bird alighted a dozen times, but no rest was ever allowed. Again he was turned, and again he distanced his pursuers, until beleaguered on all sides, he was finally speared by the chief smith and body physician, who, as an equestrian, shone

facile princeps. His skill rewarded the head of each hero engaged with the coveted white plume, which is the Amháric emblem of death.

"My children have never seen the 'Devil's sheep,'" gravely observed His Majesty, as he ascended towards the palace preceded by strains of martial music. "They live in holes in the rocks under the great waterfall, and have long snouts. My people are afraid. Take guns in the morning, and the pages shall show you the road. Now you may eat."

Heavy dew covered the waving grass, as, accompanied by the promised escort, we proceeded at an early hour to gratify the royal curiosity by the destruction of the dreaded monster. It proved on realization to be an inoffensive badger; and although the sport did not afford very much diversion, the cataract amply repaid the ride across the meadow. Leaving the terrace of table-land, the serpentine river, far hid from sight, winds through a succession of rounded hills towards a precipitous valley, down which the foaming torrent rushes over a descent of eight rocky basins. Hemmed in by fantastic pillars of basalt, composed of irregular disjointed polygons, the dark craggy surface, laid bare by the violence of ages, is at strange variance with the bright emerald turf which creeps luxuriantly to the very verge of the frowning abyss; whilst twelve hundred feet below, the sparry walls suddenly contract to the breadth of fifteen yards,

and the accumulated waters of the cascades, discharging through this natural flood-gate, boil onwards in their wild career.

At some distance from this point are the royal iron mines, and near them a perpendicular crag, which rears its crumbling form from the very bottom of the vale to the level of the upper stream, marks the suddenness of the descent. The entire face of the verdant hills that repose above the roaring cataract, were covered with thyme and other aromatic herbs, yielding up their fragrance at every step; and new and lovely flowers, sparkling under the morning dew, carpeted the slope. From the very brink of the dizzy torrent, lofty junipers raised their tall stems, and flung their mossy arms to a vast height, though still appearing but as small twigs; and the white cloud of foam and spray which arose from the gloomy chasm, reflecting the prismatic colours of the rainbow, completed a picture of singular wildness and magnificence.

How different, indeed, is the fate awaiting the waters of one and the same shower discharged over the high ridge of the Abyssinian Alps! A drop, falling on the eastern slope of the shed, wends its short course by the nearest streamlet towards the muddy Háwash; and, if not absorbed by the thirsty plains of the Adaïel, adds its mite to the lagoon of Aussa—to filter, perhaps, through some subterranean channel into the Indian Ocean. But far

distant is the pilgrimage that awaits the more ambitious cloud that sinks on the western side. Joining the Beréza, and taking the sudden leap over the dazzling cataract of Debra Berhán, it hurries down the Jumma on its impetuous course to the Bahr el Azreek—rolls through the golden sands of Dámot—and, after visiting Meroë and Thebes, and all the stately pyramids, either adds its humble tribute to the blue waves of the Mediterranean, or is sacrificed to the fertility of the land of Egypt,

"Where with annual pomp,
Rich king of floods! o'erflows the swelling Nile."

CHAPTER X.

THE ANNUAL REVIEW.

As the month rolled on, under a cold and pleasant sky, the governors of the adjacent districts flocked with their quotas to Debra Berhán, to be in readiness against the approaching anniversary of "Máskal." On this festival, which is held in commemoration of the discovery of the Holy Cross by St. Helena, the rabble militia composing the Amhára forces is marshalled in order of review, and the grassy slope in front of the palace became daily more and more thickly dotted with black booths and mules and neighing steeds. Honours, appointments, and rewards, are now conferred upon the brave and the deserving; and this being also the season of retribution, the forfeited property and the household chattels of delinquent officers add to the fair-like confusion. Herds of cattle, and long files of confiscated slaves, wooden tables, rickety bedsteads, and other paltry prizes of royal seizure, crowded the bustling parade; whilst groups of shivering camels, transferred by writ of execution to an uncongenial clime, took up their cold station on the bare ground, which

was in a few days to receive their long scraggy bones.

On the eve of the anxiously expected day of jubilee, the din of the *nugáreet*, followed by the repeated discharge of heavily-loaded matchlocks, proclaimed the movement of the household troops towards the palace portals, in order to guard the imperial person from any sudden outbreak of the wild host encamped in the environs. Halting in front of the tents of the Embassy, they performed the war-dance in our honor by the light of numerous torches. Whilst the leaders solaced themselves with a cup of our curaçoa, their curvetting chargers, ridden by confidential henchmen, bore gallantly among the dense mass; and the bright metal stars and studs of their appointments gleamed amid the dark ranks of the warriors, as they howled the Amhára death chorus. Bidding us good night, the Master of the Horse declared, amongst the affirmative whoops of his followers, that next to the royal safety, the lives of his much-esteemed foreign friends should be uppermost in his thoughts during the coming vigil.

Most unkingly was the appearance presented by the palace at break of day, for all was disorder and confusion among the court. Dirt and filth reigned paramount in every purlieu — mire to the ankle obstructed every gateway — and the rods of the wearied door-keepers were broken to splinters in their laudable endeavours to check the rush of the

eager and greasy mob. The very houses themselves seemed more gloomy, and the time-worn mud plaster of the ancient walls more sombre and dilapidated than usual.

The despot was for some hours to be seen squatted in the porch of the banqueting hall, surrounded by all the concomitant litter of a forge, which, puffing away at the foot of his *alga*, under the personal supervision of the chief smith, blew a cloud of dust and ashes into the royal nostrils. Decorum seemed to be laid aside for the day. Chattering and noise resounded in every quarter. Restraint was removed from the tongues of all, and the uplifted voice of the monarch was at times scarcely audible, amid the clatter of surrounding courtiers, and the ringing of the crow upon the anvil.

Twenty sallow eunuchs, acting each at one and the same time as master of the ceremonies, introduced to the royal notice the crowds of lieges, who, arrayed in most filthy garbs, came crushing together to the front. Priests, and monks, and petty governors, women, slaves, and cultivators, bore each some present to swell the imperial stores. Honey, butter, and beads, sticks, crutches, and censers, were alike received with complimentary speeches, saving in the instance of one burly knave, who had presumed to come before the king with a poor bundle of grass. Of him no notice whatever was taken. The very crowd seemed ashamed of so scurvy an offering, and an opening being spontaneously made,

a few kicks and shoves sent the ill-provided vassal speedily out of sight, unrewarded by the customary "God give thee more!" from the lips of his puissant sovereign.

But a very different scene presented itself when, at a later hour, we were ushered through the grassy lawn to make our bows to His Majesty. Surrounded by the grandees of the court, in their holiday attire, the generals of the cavalry and body-guard, the household officers, and the alakas and high-priests of all the principal churches, he reclined on a moveable throne, tricked out for the occasion in velvet and satin. Rich *kimkhabs*, gay silken vests, and a profusion of silver swords and decorations for gallant conduct, sparkled on the persons of the courtiers; and the turmoil attending the early hours of business had given place to the unbending gravity of Abyssinian etiquette.

The artillery escort having, greatly to the admiration of the bystanders, gone through the manual and platoon exercises with blank cartridge, three hundred *Aferoch*, under the command of the purveyor-general, entered the arena, elevating high above their heads bundles of peeled wands, bound together with wisps of rushes, and decked with garlands of the yellow "cross-flower." The wild song of rejoicing at the return of spring, and of the season of blossoms, "when the fleas retire and the flies appear," had been heard a considerable time,

waxing louder and louder, as these lictors, with their fasces, approached the scene of exhibition. Shouting the war-chorus, they now moved forward with a mincing gait, and after the most abject prostration to the earth, with a yell, hurling their rods in a heap before the palace steps, the whole crouched in a semicircle. Their leader and his stewards, some on horseback, others on foot, clothed in the spoils of wild beasts, then displayed themselves individually in the dance, galloping or vaulting between the open ranks, encouraging the men to fight, and demean themselves as warriors in the day of battle—each ending his recitative by a terrific howl, in which he was joined by the whole band.

This exhibition terminated, we were marshalled to a gay Turkish pavilion, which had been purposely erected, below the royal inspection tower. A small, roofed building, resembling the judge's stand on a country race-course, occupies a raised platform immediately within the palace enclosure. Gaudy cloth hangings enveloped this cage, and carpets and rugs of all colours covered the top of the rude wall for some distance on either side. The Negoos was already seated when we cantered past, and taking off our hats, received his condescending salutation. The usual paraphernalia of silver-embossed velvet floated at his feet. The chiefs of the churches, and the civil officers of state—a gorgeous band—were arranged along the platform, whilst a

motley crowd of many thousand spectators stood closely packed over the plain below.

Dense masses of cavalry were in readiness at the further extremity of the parade, to perform the pageant of the day. At the distance of one hundred yards from the imperial stand, a stack of tall leafless willow staves had been erected on the bright green turf which extended far and wide in front. Around it were squatted files of warriors, ensconced under their round shields like the tortoise beneath his shell—the management of sundry huge culverins, of inordinate dimensions, being divided betwixt every three. The muzzle rested over the shoulder of one, a second worked the butt, and a third was prepared, with blazing brand, to fire on the signal given.

The review commenced by the advance of Ayto Kätama's body-guard, consisting entirely of fusileers, three-fourths of whom were on this occasion equipped with the muskets that I had recently presented. Divided into four bodies, consisting each of about one hundred men, they moved slowly forward, shouting the usual war-chorus, in imitation of the voice of the lion, and were kept in line by the vigorous application of the rattan. Numerous bracelets, the reward of distinguished gallantry, glittered throughout the band, and the fixed bayonets, heretofore unknown in Southern Abyssinia, gleamed brightly in the sunshine. Gaining the prescribed distance, the warriors crouched on the ground as if

to receive cavalry. A grey-headed but energetic veteran sprang to the front—danced during some time in a variety of uncouth capers—and uttering a howl such as might be conjectured to issue from the demon in the wolf's glen, discharged his piece. The signal was followed by a running fire along the entire line, when the remaining companies, advancing in succession in the same order, went through similar evolutions, and all marched off dancing and singing to the outer ring.

The commander-in-chief of this doughty band had meanwhile formed a conspicuous, although rather a ludicrous figure in the performance. Adorned with a flowing garment of his favourite chintz, the flaring pattern of which the kaleidoscope itself must have found difficulty in devising, Ayto Kátama, a bondsman from his youth, exhibited himself in front of the phalanx of slaves, his head enveloped in a crimson harlequin cap. Tripping and mincing with the most unseemly capers and gestures, he brandished his crooked blade in a fashion which could alone have proved dangerous to himself. An inveterate chronic sore throat had rendered his voice husky; and his vapouring unmilitary motions, which reminded us of the strut of a crippled peacock, shed a broad light of caricature over this opening scene of the pantomime.

But the king's Master of the Horse next advanced with his glittering squadron of picked household cavalry—the flower of the Christian lances. As to

Melkoo was arrayed in a parti-coloured vest, surmounted by a crimson Arab fleece, handsomely studded with silver jets. A gilt embossed gauntlet encircled his right arm from the wrist to the elbow. His targe and horse-trapping displayed a profusion of silver crosses and devices, and he looked a stately and martial warrior, curvetting at the head of his troop of well-appointed lancers.

Forming line at the distance of half a mile, and approaching the willow pile with a musical accompaniment from a mounted band of kettle-drums, the squadron halted, and the leader, couching his lance, advanced in front. Whilst putting his charger through all the evolutions of Abyssinian *manége*, he vaunted his prowess in arms, recited the prodigies of valour performed in the service of his royal master, and proclaimed his continued good faith, and future bold intentions—his followers, at intervals, like the Romans of old, responding their assent by the loud clatter of lance against shield. The harangue concluded, his spears were dashed upon the ground, and the chieftain, drawing his broad two-edged falchion, brandished it in the air: "*Tockatoo, Looldá, Looldá, Gummoo, Sik, Oooooh,*" he vociferated, as he dashed his heels into the flanks of his prancing steed. An instantaneous howl, and independent discharge of culverins, answered the signal, and the wild troop swept past at a gallop to the further extremity of the parade.

At the royal request, I caused a salute of twenty-one guns to be fired by the artillery escort, from the brass three-pounder, which had been dragged by oxen below the willow-stack. Great was the admiration of the wild Galla multitude as they gazed on the appointments and embroidered housings of the British officers now assembled on horseback in front of the watch-tower; and sufficiently diverting were the remarks they passed on our fluttering plumes of white and red feathers—their own emblems of bloody though not chivalrous deeds. When the cannonade opened upon ears that had never before listened to the thunder of ordnance, and a cloud of white smoke curled high above the heads of those who had hitherto beheld such volumes arise only from their own burning hamlets, a buzz of applause pealed from end to end of the extended line. Each echoing report carried to the hearts of the disaffected a powerful argument for future loyalty, and it needed little discrimination to unravel the royal policy which had dictated the display.

Thirteen governors, clothed in spoils stripped from the lion and the leopard, with other conspicuous trophies of the chase, next passed successively in order of review. Decked in emblems of blood—rings, feathers, bracelets, and gauntlets—tokens all of individual prowess in hand to hand combat with the king's foes—the leader of each glittering cohort indulged in a long rambling harangue, ere

shouting the signal for the charge. Many there were who wore the *akodáma*—a massive transverse beam of silver projecting across the brows, and hung with a profusion of chains and pendants, the reward for the slaughter of an Adel, several of which respectable body, including the Ras el Káfilah and his fiery coadjutor, Ibrahim Shehém, were spectators of the martial manœuvres of the Amhára troops.

An interesting, though perhaps not a very military sight, was witnessed as the hours drew on. The famished governors, judges, chiefs, nobles, courtiers, and dignitaries of the church, who occupied the elevated platform on either side of the royal box, unable longer to resist the calls of hunger, were suddenly to be perceived in the act of employing their crooked swords in reducing the dimensions of several sides and flaps of raw beef, which had been furnished by the king's munificence, and were ostentatiously displayed by as many menials—nor, under the well-directed and vigorous attacks of the assembly, were the reeking collops long in disappearing.

A few only of the detachments, whose leaders were not gifted with eloquence, charged past without a halt from the ground on which they had formed; and it is not improbable that these, having made the circuit of the palace enclosure, had swelled the pageant by appearing a second time on the stage. Others, dismounting, performed

various evolutions on foot—ancient heroes, with falchions of truly portentous dimensions, capering and striding before the line, until on a signal made by the culverins, they vaulted again into the saddles, and dashed onward over the green-sward, now fast fading under the tramp of hoofs.

Last of all came the tall martial figure of Abogáz Maretch, chief of all the tributary Galla in the south, at the head of his Abitchu legion, who closed the display of barbarian tactics. Three thousand in number, the sea of wild horsemen moved in advance to the music of the kettle-drums, their arms and decorations flashing in the sun-beam, and their ample white robes and long braided hair streaming to the breeze. At the shrill whoop of their leader, with the rushing sound of a hurricane, the cohort clattered past the royal stand, and the moving forest of lances disappeared under a cloud of dust.

From eight to ten thousand cavalry were present in the field, and the spectacle, which lasted from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon, was exceedingly wild and impressive. Did the warriors who this day recounted their valorous achievements before the monarch only possess hearts of a measure with their good weapons and strong seats, they could not fail to prove the means of extensive power and conquest under the control of an aspiring chief; but such unfortunately is not the case, and the speed of their stout hardy

steeds is too frequently exerted in the wrong direction.

As soon as it became dark, several rockets which we had brought with us were discharged from our tents by the king's express desire. With fire-arms the Abyssinians were previously acquainted, and the brass galloper which had echoed so recently, although viewed with wonderful respect, was still only the engine on a colossal scale, to which they were familiarised. But these were the first rockets of which His Majesty had viewed the flight, and the impression they produced upon his mind, as he gazed from his watch-tower, was scarcely less than that worked upon his assembled subjects. Night had thrown her mantle around, and the novel principle of ascent, with the grandeur of the brilliant rush into the skies, afforded matter of amazement to all spectators. When the projectile started with a loud roar from its bed, men, women, and children, fell flat upon their faces. Horses and mules broke loose from their tethers, and the warrior who had any heart remaining shouted aloud. The Galla tribes who witnessed the meteor-like explosion from the vicinity, ascribed the phenomenon to the use of potent medicines, and declared that since the Gyptzis could at pleasure produce comets in the sky, and rain fire from heaven, there was nought for them left, save abject submission to the king's commands.

The ceremony of burning the stack of willow

staves on the parade commenced shortly after this exhibition, and, superintended by His Majesty in person, terminated the proceedings of the busy day. Shrouded from the gaze of the populace, the ladies of the royal harem danced and clapped their hands together, as their white ghostlike figures moved in circling procession around the pile so shortly to be committed to the flames. Then followed a rush of torch-bearers from various quarters, mingled with the corps of Aferoch, and all reeling under the effects of strong old hydromel. Three hundred flower-decked fasces, displayed bright and fresh in the morning, but now withered and faded, were with savage shouts and yells cast simultaneously on the pyre, and a burst of lurid glare, which revealed all that was passing, at once proclaimed their ignition. Thousands crowding to the spot added their tribute, and joined in the din of voices. Black crosses to repel the devil were by many described on their foreheads with the charred wood, in the struggle to obtain which hard blows were dealt lustily about, and some of the competitors were even forced into the pile. The legend asserts, that on the discovery of the Holy Cross by the mother of Constantine the Great, she caused beacon fires to be lighted on all the high hills of Palestine, upon beholding which a general shout of joy was raised by the people of Constantinople. In imitation hereof, wild songs and yells of triumph from the inebriated Christians of Shoa, now completed the turmoil and

confusion, and with the crackling red flames that curled up the tall dry staves, ascended high towards the starry vault of heaven in honour of Saint Helena.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GALLA CAPITAL.

ANGOLLÁLA, on the Galla frontier, founded ten years since by the reigning monarch, is now the capital of the western portion of Shoa, and during the greater part of the year it forms His Majesty's favourite place of residence. Thither he proceeded on the morning following the festivities of Máskal. Upwards of three thousand horsemen composed the *cortége*, which was swelled every quarter of a mile by large detachments of cavalry. Led by their respective chiefs, each band dismounted at a considerable distance on the flank, and advancing on foot with shoulders bared, fell prostrate with one accord before the state umbrellas. The Negoos bestrode a richly caparisoned mule, with swallow-tailed housings of crimson and green, and massive silver collars; and he was closely followed by the corps of shield-bearers under the direction of the Master of the Horse, who, by vigorous sallies, and the judicious exercise of a long stick, kept the crowd from encroaching upon the royal person, during our eight-mile ride over the level plain.

From four to five hundred circular huts, consisting of loose stone walls very rudely thatched, cover the slopes of a group of tabular hills that enclose an extensive quadrangle. On the summit of the largest eminence, near the church of Kidána Meherát, stands the palace, defended by six rows of stout high palisades. A clumsy stone edifice of two stories, rising in the form of a dove-cot, occupies the centre. It was erected by Demetrius, an Albanian visiter, and is considerably superior in point of architecture to all other domiciles in the realm, although somewhat tottering in appearance, and deserted from an apprehension of earthquake, which holds strong possession of the royal mind. "Earthquakes are bad things," was His Majesty's remark, "for they overthrow houses, and demolish my people."

The rugged ascent up the steep hill-side was thronged with spectators, male and female, assembled to greet the arrival of their sovereign, and to stare at the foreigners. Paupers and mendicants crowded the first enclosure; and the approach from the second gate through four court-yards, to the King's quarters, was lined with matchlockmen and fusileers, who, as the Embassy passed between the ranks, made a laughable attempt to present arms in imitation of the artillery escort at the review. Kitchens, magazines, and breweries were scattered in all directions; and, with the long banqueting-hall, the chamber of audience, the apartments of the

women, and the solitary cells, formed a curious, but far from imposing group of buildings.

The despot, in high good-humour, conducted us over the unswept premises, and up a rude ladder to the attic story, which commands a pleasant prospect over wide grassy meadows, intersected by serpentine streamlets, and covered with the royal herds. Upon a floor strewed with newly-cut grass, blazed a wood fire in an iron stove, with the never-failing cats luxuriating under its influence. A dirty couch graced the alcove, and a few guns and fowling-pieces the rudely white-washed walls, but otherwise the dreary chamber was unfurnished. "I have brought you here," quoth His Majesty, "that you may understand what I want. These rooms require to be ornamented; and I wish your artist to cover them with elephants and soldiers, and with representations of all the buildings and strange things in your country, which my eyes have not yet seen. At present my children may go."

Awnings had been pitched on the summit of Debra Máskal[1], the southern eminence. The weather was now intensely cold, and a fire during the evening hours could not be dispensed with. As the embers died away, and the smoke cleared from the interior of the flimsy pall, our teeth chattered under the pinching exhalation from the ground. Rifles became rusty in a single night from the

[1] The Hill of the Cross.

heavy white dew that saturated the cloth—watches stopped beneath the pillow—and heaps of blankets proved of small avail to warm our cramped and shivering limbs, which told full well of the hoar frost that was encrusting the verdure of the adjacent meadow.

In the filthy purlieus of the palace, and close to the outer gate, stands a mound of ashes and rubbish, mingled with the noisome lees that stream over the road from the adjacent royal breweries. Packs of half-wild dogs, the pest of Angollála, luxuriate hereon during the day, and at night set forth on their reckless foray, dispelling sleep, and destroying tents in their pilfering invasions. Long before the dawn, the shrill crowing of a thousand cocks first startles the slumberer from his uneasy repose. The wild whoop of the oppressed Galla, who demands redress, then mingles with the "*Abiet! Abiet!*" reiterated by the more civilised Amhára from every hill-top; and the memory of those who have ever witnessed the breaking of the glorious day amid nature's luxuriant forests of the East, is forcibly carried back to the tangled thicket, where the *campanero* tolls her bell-like note from the branches of the spreading tamarind, and the wild ape fills up the interval with his deep voice of exultation, as he pounces upon the bitter apple of the wood.

Bands of mendicant monks next silently take post on the crest of a crumbling wall, within spear's length of the slumberer's pillow, and by a shrill re-

citative, followed by a chorus of independent voices, dispel the morning dream, whilst they scream with a pertinacity that bribery can alone quell. Psalms and hymns never fail to usher in the morn; and when the asperity of cracked and aged throats is somewhat mellowed by distance, the chant of Christian praise—now rambling wildly through all the varied shakes and intonations of a single voice—now swelling with the choral unison of many—is not altogether unpleasant. But greatly more melodious would it fall upon the mortal ear, if a lesson in music were taken from the larks, which rise in hundreds from the steaming meadows, to lift their matin song—at intervals warbling far and faint in the cool dewy air, and again approaching with one rich quaver of delicious harmony, as they fearlessly alight upon the awning.

To the cry of "*Abiet!*" which now resounded so unceasingly, the Abyssinians attach the opinion that, on the last day, Satan, taking up his post before the gates of heaven, will continue thus to vociferate until he gains admittance. On presenting himself before the judgment-seat, it will be asked "what he would have?" "The souls which have been wrested from me by the angels," is to be the reply; but on his acknowledging inability to specify the names of those who have robbed him, the Father of Evil will receive a command to be gone, and never to shew his face again.

Importunity is an attribute which stands promi-

nently forth in the character of a native of Southern Abyssinia. For hours together the numerous applicants for redress continue thus to call upon the "master" from every eminence around the palace, until at length the door-keepers appearing, beckon the petitioners to draw nigh. Well aware, however, of the existing understanding between these servitors and the very judges against whose decision they would appeal, they give no heed to the summons, but thrusting their fingers into their ears, do but lift up their voices the louder, until the king commands one of his pages to cause the whole to assemble in the court-yard, where, with shoulders bared to the waist, the parties fearlessly bring their complaint before the throne.

Opportunities were therefore daily afforded of witnessing the dispensation of justice in this singular and anomalous land, where an Æthiopic translation of the code of Justinian, adapted to the customs of the country, forms the basis of legal decisions. The Fétha Negést, or "Judgment of the Kings," as this volume is entitled, is said to have fallen from heaven during the reign of Constantine the Great; but its statutes, although liberally quoted on all convenient occasions, are not considered binding upon the monarch, unless found in perfect unison with his own despotic pleasure. Disputes are first adjusted by the governors of provinces, who, in the powers with which they are invested, resemble the feudal barons of the middle ages, and often perpetrate the

grossest injustice. But the injured party can always seek redress in the court of the Four *Wamberoch*, or "the chairs," who are the judges civil and criminal. These dignitaries daily take their seat in the verandah of a building allotted in one of the palace courts, where accuser and accused delivered their conflicting statements in an equally elevated tone of oratory, accompanied by much theatrical gesture. The decision lies again under appeal to the throne; and whensoever the king sees fit to reverse it, the severest censure is invariably passed upon the delinquent "chairs."

The lives and the lands of every subject of Shoa belong *de jure* to Sáhela Selássie, and of their persons and worldly substance he is absolute master. Whether at the demise of the king or of the subject, the estates of the latter are again at the disposal of the crown, and without the occurrence of either contingency the mere will and pleasure of the despot is alone requisite to their resumption. Violent use, however, is not often made of this arbitrary power, and it is rarely resorted to except in cases of high treason or of offences against the state, which, in place of capital punishment, are visited by confiscation of property, with imprisonment for life. But if the criminal shall have taken timely sanctuary in the monastery of Affaf Woira, his person is held inviolate, even by the king, and the monks can generally mediate with success. Slavery, either limited to the offender, or extended to his whole

family, and continued to his descendants, during one, two, or even seven generations, is a punishment from which no class is held exempt, but exile is usually substituted for offences committed by the clergy, the banished ecclesiastic being then commanded to "stay not by day, neither to tarry by night," if he would avoid the penalty that awaits delay.

In accordance with the Mosaic dispensation, a life for a life is the sentence passed upon the murderer; but, obtaining the consent of the relatives of the deceased, he is authorized by law to purchase his pardon, and to beg through the land until he shall have accumulated the stipulated ransom. His escape under any circumstances involves forfeiture of property by all his relatives who may be residing north of the river Airára, and unless he be produced, the attachment continues in full force during three generations. Robbery is usually investigated through the Lebáshi, or "thief-taker," who is indispensable to Abyssinian jurisprudence, and the unhappy wretch whom his imp selects, if unable to pay the fine adjudged, is visited by castigation either with a whip or cudgel. If a Christian, he is then confided to the care of a follower of the Prophet in some of the hot unwholesome Mohammadan districts—if an Islám, to that of a Christian—the party on whom the culprit is thus quartered, being in either case held responsible to the crown for his safe custody during his term of hard labour.

In all the courts of judicature, interest for money

lent is recognised at the rate of one *ámole* per mensem upon each dollar. No note of hand is ever exchanged, but the security of a substantial house-keeper is taken, who is termed "*wás*." Debtors are generally manacled, and suffered to roam about, in order to beg the amount due among the charitably disposed; and it is a fact, that in the absence of a "*wás*," either the creditor or one of his retainers is chained to the defaulter, and the happy couple thus linked, wander through the country together, crying "By Mary! By Mary!" until the requisite sum shall have been contributed for the sake of the Holy Virgin.

At home and abroad, on excursions and on military expeditions, the loud cry of "*Abiet!*" salutes the royal ear from situations the most strange and unexpected, and although the sceptre is despotic, appeals are almost always promptly attended to. The more boisterous petitioner, who will not remain content with the promise of a future consideration of his claim, is sometimes visited with the stick, but no available opportunity is neglected of listening to those who present themselves. The halting-stone and the green turf are frequently transferred into seats of justice; judgment is given whilst ambling over the fields and meadows; and during five days of every week, many hours are patiently devoted by the monarch to the unravelment of knotty points in litigation.

CHAPTER XII.

CHASM OF THE CHÁCHA.

THE King had oftentimes vaunted the extraordinary natural fortification of Angollála by the river Chácha, which for two days' journey to the north-westward rolls through a deep precipitous valley, opposing an impassable barrier; and being then joined by the Beréza and by numerous other streams, skirts the celebrated sanctuary of Sena Márkos, whence the combined waters, taking the title of Jumma, roll on into the Nile. Setting out one morning at sunrise through the "sirkosh ber [1]," he sent a page to conduct us to the junction of the tributary Fácha, which tumbles its torrent over a perpendicular wall seven hundred feet in height; and here His Majesty, surrounded by a crowd of noisy applicants for justice, already occupied his favourite seat on the brink of the giddy chasm.

A cloud had overcast the despot's brow, for "Bord Winkee," his favourite war-steed, had that morning fallen down dead whilst exercising in the meadow. Taken in battle from a potent Galla

[1] i. e. The secret gate or wicket.

chieftain, whose name it inherited, the steed had long enjoyed a stall within the royal bedchamber, and strong fears indeed were entertained for the effeminate little page Kátama, who had been the luckless jockey. But no punishment followed the catastrophe. The boy was a court favourite, and Antonistye, his father, by far the most renowned warrior in Shoa, was mayor of the corporation of king's herdsmen, who take the field in independent bodies, and under the title of *Abelám*[1] form a distinct class, mingling with no other portion of the population.

"What think you of my Galla ditch?" inquired the monarch. "Have you any such in your country?"

There could be but one opinion regarding the yawning gulf, which extends a full mile in breadth, and has been rent by some violent convulsion in the bowels of the earth. Fifteen hundred feet below the otherwise uninterrupted plain, the mingled waters flow on like a silver cord, fed at intervals by foaming cascades, which raise a shower of white spray in their headlong descent: whilst frowning basaltic cliffs cast a deep gloom over wild steppes and terraces, whose lone hamlets and cottages are scarcely to be distinguished from the fallen masses of rock. Vast colonies of pig-faced baboons, the principal inhabitants, sally forth morning and evening from

[1] Derived from the Amháric word "*abélla*," "he may eat up."

their strong city, to devastate the surrounding crops, in defiance of incessant war waged against them by the peasantry, armed with sticks and stones; but outcasts, and criminals too, find a safe asylum among the almost inaccessible crannies of the perpendicular scarps, where they hide amidst masses of foliage, unthought of, and unmolested.

Deep buried in the bosom of this stupendous chasm, and immediately below the roaring cataract, stands the little hamlet of Guréyo, the seat of the royal iron-works, and thither, after the sylvan court had closed, the king descended, leaning on the arm of the chief smith, great master of the Tabiban, or mechanics, and royal physician in ordinary. The process of smelting and refining pursued in Abyssinia has been common to almost every age and country from the earliest antiquity. Broken into small fragments and coarsely pulverised, the ore is mixed with a large proportion of charcoal, and placed in a clay furnace resembling the smith's hearth, but furnished with a sloping cavity considerably depressed below the level of the blast pipes. The non-metallic particles being brought to a state of fusion by the constant action of four pair of hand-worked bellows, the iron with the scoria sinks to the bottom. This is again broken, and re-fused, when the dross flowing off, the pure metal is discharged in pigs, which, by a repetition of heating and welding, are wrought into

bars; but owing to the very rude and primitive apparatus employed, the unceasing toil of ten hours is indispensable to the realization of two pounds' weight of very inferior iron, which after all, in private works, is liable to a heavy tax to the crown.

Embowered in a dark grove of junipers on the opposite brink of the Chácha rises the silent village of Chérkos, rendered famous a few years since through the massacre of one thousand of its Christian inhabitants by Medóko[1], a celebrated rebel. His proceedings occupy one of the most conspicuous pages in the chronicles of Shoa. Exalted by rare military talents and undaunted intrepidity to the highest pinnacle of royal favour, he became elated by the distinctions conferred, and being suspected of aiming at even greater dominion, was suddenly hurled into the deepest disgrace, and bereft in the same moment of property and power. Burning with revenge, the warrior crossed the border to the subjugated, though disaffected Galla, whom he had so lately held in check, and who now with open arms received him as their leader in revolt.

At the head of a vast horde of wild cavalry, reinforced by a number of matchlockmen, who had deserted their allegiance, the rebel marched upon Angolléla. But he was frustrated in his designs by

[1] His Gazel.

finding the only assailable point fortified by staked pits and ditches—the deep rugged channel of the Chácha opposing, as he well knew, an insurmountable barrier in every other direction. Desertion soon spread among the undisciplined rabble, and after several skirmishes with the royal troops, the offender sought an asylum at Zalla Dingai. Through the powerful mediation of Zenama Work, the Queen-dowager, he was suffered to throw himself at the feet of his despotic master, and not only obtained pardon, but from motives of policy was eventually restored to all his former dignities.

Medóko's second rebellion and tragic death, embodied from the authentic details of eye-witnesses, will form the subject of the six succeeding chapters. They are designed to throw upon the character of the monarch, and upon the customs of his court, a light which could scarcely have been admitted through any other lattice. The standard of revolt long waved over the heathen frontier, and when the storm which for months threatened the subversion of the empire had at length been quelled by the extinction of the fiery and turbulent spirit that had raised it, large offerings were made by His Majesty to all the churches and monasteries throughout the realm, in return for their prayers; and solemn processions and thanksgivings were attended by the exercise of every sort of work of charity and devotion.

Among the royal retinue this day seated before

the village of Chérkos, was a young man of haughty and daring exterior, whose flowing black mantle covered a breast that must have been often agitated by strange emotions. It was Chára, the son of the rebel, one of the only two members of the disgraced family to whom Sáhela Selássie has become reconciled, and a youth who is said to resemble his sire, not less in appearance than in gallant bearing. Prior to the breaking out of the insurrection, he had urged the arrest of his father; but no attention being paid in the proper quarter, he subsequently enlisted under his banner, and carried arms against the crown until the fall of the traitor, when, from his previous well-timed, though disregarded disclosure, he received full pardon for the past.

Ayto Tunkaiye, a gigantic warrior, greatly distinguished for his valour, who enacted a prominent part in Medoko's execution, was also of the *cortége*; and beside him stood Hailoo, younger brother of the rebel noble, who purchased restoration to royal favour at the expense of a deed of the blackest treachery. This he recounted not only without a blush, but with extraordinary satisfaction at his fancied heroism. Apprehending a similar fate with him whose cause he had espoused, he fled across the border, and found a safe asylum with Wodáge Gimee, a powerful Galla chieftain, long in open revolt, and one of the bitterest enemies of the monarch. Basely assassinating his benefactor, whilst seated unsuspectingly in the open field, he sprang upon his

horse, and casting the head of his victim at the royal footstool in token of his villany, was rewarded by advancement to the government of Mésur Médur, a post of high honour, which he enjoys to the present day, and which occupies the frontier of the Galla dependencies.

CHAPTER XIII.

MEDÓKO THE REBEL.

"Like whom to Shoan eyes,
None ere has risen and none ere shall rise."

Renowned for his great strength and dauntless heart, Medóko was of a more robust and brawny form than most of his countrymen. There was a bold bearing in his erect carriage—his gait was proud, and his speech haughty; and not less dexterous in the management of his steed, than powerful in wielding his weapons, he stood proclaimed the most valiant, although the most insolent, of the Amhára. His handsome features and his gallant deeds had gained for him the palm of favour among all the dames of the land. An aquiline nose stood prominent from his manly countenance, and a bright eye sparkled clear and daring under a bushy brow. The fairest daughters of Shoa loved to look upon the warrior, and rejoiced to add their beauty to his harem, or to experience the gifts of his bountiful hand; and the shrill note of female welcome burst from every throat, as he curveted through the streets upon his gallant charger shining in brass and steel,

or careered at speed over the plain, with his white and crimson robe streaming behind his athletic frame.

Riches and honours and preferment had been again liberally showered upon his head by the monarch who had so frequently received the benefit of his assistance, and had been more than once indebted for his life to the strong arm of the chief. The memory of past crime seemed to have been obliterated and forgotten—

"Had he not err'd, his glory had been less;"

and he was now raised to the high post of governor of all the Galla, and Abogáz of the southern frontier of the kingdom.

But there was no lack of enemies to the impetuous favourite; and among the most bitter of his opponents was one, who, by the insidious tongue of malice, materially contributed to achieve the downfal and destruction of the bravest son of Shoa.

Well versed in all the petty arts of a mean and sycophantish court, Father Asrát had held during two successive reigns the snug office of confessor to the royal family. Sleek from good living, his hood fell without a wrinkle over his portly person; and bowing in devotion before his superiors, the words of flattery flowed in profusion from his honied tongue. The sins of the rich were easily forgiven; substitute was immediately produced for the slight penance decreed by his lip; and the effects of

his indulgence might be clearly observed in the fine muslin which ever encircled his shaven head—in the glossy condition of his pampered mule—and in the gay ivory handle of his polished crutch, which were ostentatiously displayed as he daily brushed through the court-yards of the palace.

On many occasions the audacity of Medóko had broken out into open mockery of the priestly rapacity; but although the dark feelings of revenge rankled in the breast of the monk, yet a scowling look of hatred was alone ventured in return to the jibes of the great governor and first favourite of the despot. On one fatal festival, however, when the fumes of the old hydromel had gained a complete ascendency over the party, a bitter jest was retorted by the exasperated priest, a fierce wrangle ensued, and the holy person of Father Asrát was violently spurned against the wall by the strong arm of the hot-blooded chief.

A reconciliation had been outwardly effected by mutual friends, but from that day the most wily insinuations were used to poison the breast of the king. The actions of the past were vividly brought to his recollection; words that had never been spoken, and expressions craftily distorted to serve a vile purpose, were daily poured into the royal ear; and although the demeanour of the monarch remained unchanged, suspicion was gradually being instilled into his mind, and the cloud required but a slight shock to discharge its contents.

According to the custom of the country, the royal princesses lived in total seclusion until it suited the despot's caprice or policy to open the door of their cage. "A daughter of the royal house will be led to the nuptial altar on the morrow," is the sole intimation afforded; and the happy bridegroom is not aware of the honour to be conferred, until the hand of "the introducer" leads him from the group which encircles the throne, to the immediate performance of the rite. But the stout-hearted Medóko had contrived to behold the beauty of the far-famed princess "Golden Fruit," and intoxicated by a long succession of prosperity, and stirred up by the deceitful priest to believe that the king would refuse no request preferred by a chief whose services were held in such high esteem, he rashly resolved upon demanding the only remaining favour which the monarch had hitherto withheld.

On a bright morning in May before the commencement of the monsoon, a distinguished cavalcade entered the outer gates of the palace fortifications. The stately person of the leader was enveloped in a flowing robe bedizened with many crimson stripes, and a long white feather streamed high over his raven hair. A gauntlet and bracelet of silver decorated his sinewy arm, the token of many a hard conflict; and the massive silver sword was girded to his right side, the emblem of high authority and place. The bearer of his silver shield preserved a respectful space for the chief, and a

dark war-steed, glittering in chains and studs of polished metal, followed at his side. A dense mass of wild Galla, armed with the serrated lance and tough black buckler, closed the procession, which, amidst the acclamations of the assembled mob, wound up the rocky path of the palace hill at Ankóber.

On gaining the last flight of steps, the great door was thrown open, and Medóko advanced to the audience of leave previous to his departure to the seat of his government. The small latticed gallery had been decked out in his honour, and the crimson velvet hangings of state depended in front, loaded with massive silver ornaments. Rich carpets were spread below for the convenience of the more favoured nobles. The officers of the household, uncovered to the waist, stood in a double row in front; and the monarch reclined upon his seat of honour at the open window, gaily clad in a green silk vest bordered with gold, over which the folds of the usual white robe of Abyssinia hung gracefully around his recumbent figure.

Advancing to the prescribed limit, Medóko, according to the custom of ages, prostrated himself to the earth before the descendant of Solomon, and then, raising his haughty figure erect before the monarch, he boldly preferred the request of his heart. "Behold, I have brought a present to the king, that he may hear me in love, and dismiss his servant well pleased from his presence."

Ten war steeds fully equipped, together with five hundred bullocks, twenty slaves, and two large bags of silver coin, were ushered into the court-yard. The eye of the avaricious king brightened with satisfaction at the liberal gift of his vassal, and the words were spoken more kindly than usual—"What is the desire of the Abogáz?" But the answer of daring rashness which followed fell like a thunderbolt upon the court—"The hand of the Princess Worka Ferri."

The rod of green rushes dropped from the grasp of the astonished "introducer," and chiefs and nobles half rose from their seats, as the mysteries of royal seclusion were thus boldly infringed before the multitude. But although the monarch was irritated to the last pitch by this unprecedented insolence, he restrained his feelings under the usual cold calm smile. "We will converse regarding this business at a future period," he said; and the audience was closed with an invitation to the chief to pass his last evening in the private apartments of the palace—an honour conferred only upon a favoured few.

Warnings and advice were not wanting from many quarters; and recollection called to mind many dark scenes which had been transacted at the friendly board of the despot, who was well known to be in a dangerous mood when too many smiles lighted up his countenance, and who preferred the quiet capture of his enemy to forcible seizure in the

open day. But the rash Medóko, confident in his own ascendency through service rendered, discarded every thought of evil. With a stout heart he entered the gloomy hall at the appointed hour, and under the guidance of an eunuch proceeded along the rough dark passages of the interior.

On gaining the inner apartment, he found Father Asrát and his assistant kneeling in the corner before their low desks, mumbling the lessons of the evening from the miracles of the Holy Virgin —divers flasks of potent spirits being as usual ranged on the wicker table for the entertainment of the select company. All were in the highest humour. The demeanour of the monarch was kind and conciliating; and amongst the honours and favours which were that night liberally bestowed, the priest received the high office of chief of the church of the Saviour in the romantic village of Chérkos. The customary topics were discussed—the usual quantity of strong liquor was swallowed—and at intervals the choristers chanted the Psalms of David. The evening passed in great hilarity, and the company at length rose to depart.

His heart bounding high with future hope, Medóko stooped low to pay the salutation of the night, and was instantaneously pinioned from behind, whilst a rush from the front prevented every effort to lay hand upon his weapon. By his fierce struggles he once nearly regained an erect position, but numbers crowded through every passage,

and he found himself stretched on the floor securely bound and hampered with many coils of rope.

"Fetters and a dungeon for the slave!" exclaimed the monarch as he quitted the scene of betrayed hospitality, and guards entered to obey the royal mandate. But ere the captive could be borne to his doom, a heavy foot pressed upon his prostrate neck. The smile of satisfied revenge played over the bloated features of the malicious monk, and it shot through the heart of the fallen warrior. A deadly vow was muttered betwixt his clenched teeth; and as he lay foaming with rage, the words were half audible through his suppressed breathing, "Let him guard his cowled head if he can: henceforth to the Devil with my allegiance!"

CHAPTER XIV.

ESCAPE FROM GÓNCHO.

Medóko had been hurried from the presence, and urged along the rough road with as much rapidity as possible; but people are seldom so unfortunate as they suppose themselves to be. His fate was not as yet accomplished, and a slight diversion had been already made in his favour. A faithful follower, alarmed at the protracted stay of his chief, had silently stationed himself at the secret outlet of the palace, whence he witnessed the progress of his beloved master. A devoted band, having hastily collected, followed close on the footsteps of the guard; and as the prisoner passed through the thick forest of Aferbeine, the shrill note of the Galla henchman more than once fell on his attentive ear, to convey the welcome tidings that he was not altogether deserted in this his hour of distress.

As the party climbed the rocky steep, the moon was fast sinking behind the great mountains, and her pale beams fell cold over the isolated rock of Góncho, on the summit of which is perched the state prison of the kingdom. The lower extremity of this hill is rent and furrowed by many tangled

ravines, and the bare craggy scarp frowns over the wide-spreading valleys which stretch on either side. Sharp palisades guard the approach, and strong gateways lead through well-defended court-yards to a cluster of edifices which form the residence of the frontier governor, and the entrance to the places of confinement.

Vanquished by fate, yet refusing to yield, a spasm of painful emotion covered with cold dew the brow of the haughty chief, as he passed the rocky threshold of the prison. But the thoughts of a free foot on the mountain-side, and the signal vengeance that would follow, banished from his stout heart the usual feelings of despair, and in ironical words he returned the salutations of his brother Abogáz, into whose keeping he was about to be consigned.

Wulásma Mohammad was a fat imperious personage, of most sinister expression of countenance, and much more feared than either loved or respected. The cool healthy air of his mountain fortress, and a quiet life of inactivity, had filled his veins with a rich flow of blood, and he spent the greater portion of the day over a jar of potent hydromel. His body had become bloated and his mind bewildered by the fumes of the liquor; and dividing his time between dreaming and drinking, he left the charge of his bolts and avocations to his burly brother Jhalia, who, fortunately for the prisoner, was now engaged on the frontier in quelling

a disturbance which had been induced by the stupidity of his superior.

The vulture eye of the Abogáz brightened up on the arrival of the illustrious Medóko; and being at the moment unable to comprehend whether he came as a prisoner or as a guest, an order for entertainment and wine rung through the apartment, instead of chains and fetters for the malefactor. Relieved from the ropes which had hitherto confined his movements, the chief was ushered with all ceremony into the great hall of the court; nor was it until after reiterated requests on the part of the guard, and a solemn adjuration by the life of the king, that the blinking gaoler, cheated out of his expected carouse, consented to take some measures of precaution.

Built on the only sloping face of the hill, the governor's houses stretch entirely across the outlet from scarp to scarp, and from his immediate bed-chamber two trap-doors cover the passages to the inner recesses of the prison. A staircase descends from one into the vaults underground, where immured in chains are the state criminals, and the younger branches of the royal family; and a passage leads through the other to a series of small apartments erected upon the upper surface of the hill, but surrounded by strong palisades to the very verge of the precipice. The scarp was of considerable height, and had never yet been attempted by those offenders whose lighter crimes had en-

forced a residence in these more agreeable locations; and the besotted Wulásma being in no mood to reflect on the strength and daring of his present charge, merely conducted him to one of these places of security, and barring the door on the outside, retired grumbling to the crown officials, after leaving an ample repast for the entertainment of his distinguished prisoner.

The rude wax taper was flaming and sinking at intervals over the untouched food, as one quarter of an hour was passed in attentive musing; but the peculiarities of the prisoner's situation were too striking not to be immediately taken advantage of, and he accordingly braced up his spirits for the enterprise. Having contrived with his host's knife to remove the thongs and sticks which composed the walls of his flimsy dungeon, he crept into an outer apartment, where the stars could be perceived twinkling brightly through an aperture. To wrench the iron bars from the window was the work of a moment; and leaping from a considerable height, Medóko stood unshackled in the cool air of heaven. There remained still many hours of the night, and the darkness favoured his undertaking, although otherwise little suited to the task to be performed; but palisade and paling gradually yielded to his strength, and after an anxious hour of exertion, he reached the dark precipice unnoticed and undiscovered.

Nought broke the stillness of the scene save the

sound of the wind whistling over the bleak crags; and as the daring fugitive stood for a time in meditation before venturing the awful leap, an owl, brushing his cheek, soared away on noiseless pinion; its hoot which re-echoed from below seeming as the voice of a spirit calling to follow without fear. Quickly recovering his confidence at the omen, and nerving himself for the perilous task, he slid down the face of the precipice, and recommending his soul to the Holy Virgin, quitted hold of the last tuft of grass which sustained him over the yawning gulf. Down, down dropped the chief, until his very senses reeled again; but his flowing cotton robe materially assisted the miraculous descent, by catching the sharp points, and restraining for a moment the rapidity of his flight. The strength of his long brawny arms served him well in this hour of need, as clutching the rocks he retained his hold for a second, in order to gain breath for the next dread plunge into the gloomy abyss. Then bounding again like the falling stone, he pursued his flight, till at length, bruised and bleeding, he reached the bottom of the rocky scarp, hitherto untraversed except by the sticky foot of the lizard.

The shrill note for assistance, well known to every Galla ear, was speedily answered by his watchful followers. Crowding round their beloved chief, they quickly bound up his wounds, and after a short rest the party recovered the beaten track.

Placed once again on his own good steed, he raised his form in the stirrups, and shouted his battle-cry of defiance. Each bridle was laid loose upon the mane, and the wild riders plunged at speed down the flinty ravine, now partially illumined by the flash of matchlocks from the alarmed garrison. A brave spirit is not to be subdued by exile, for every soil forms his home and his country; and away to the free plains of the Galla the headlong course was bent, where Medóko was well assured of receiving every sympathy and protection.

CHAPTER XV.

INSURRECTION OF THE GALLA.

In the heart of the mountain range of Garra Gorphoo stood a large Galla hamlet—for it has been since visited in wrath by the monarch—situated in one of those sweet locations which the children of nature delight to select. The deep valley is thickly clothed with the most luxuriant cultivation, and its sides rise in a gentle slope, throwing out a succession of verdant terraces, teeming with herbs and wild flowers. On one of these stood the village of Mundeeda, the residence of Góma, the great chief of the Abitchu. A bright green sward extended far in front, and the steep mountain that rises behind afforded shelter from the bleak blast of winter. A sparkling brook, after dashing in tiny cascades down the craggy face, glides away in a quiet course over the enamelled meadow, until lost in the grove of dark junipers which rest on the side of a grassy knoll, where the sacrifice was performed in honour of the deities, and where the listless heathen was wont to dream away the hours of idleness.

The tenements, although low and rudely constructed of stakes and mud, were warm and com-

modious; and the numerous posts which rose from the clay floor to support the thatch, served as a resting-place for shields, and spears, and crooked swords, which now imparted to the interior the semblance of an extensive armoury. Every thing was in a state of utter confusion and uproar. Large droves of wild shaggy horses, and clusters of fiery savages were grouped on the plain outside. The ringing shout of the warrior mingled with the neigh of his war-steed, and the din and the clatter of household avocations resounded from the interior of every hut. To add to the bustle, the Galla females were running from house to house, with their long raven tresses streaming over their bare shoulders; whilst their short leather petticoats, with embroidered flounces, displayed the well-shaped limbs and the graceful form, for which the tribe are so justly famed.

In every nook large earthen jars, and wicker baskets, filled with grain, were stored in readiness to supply the demands for food, as each tribe poured in to the general gathering of the clans. Black eyes peered wildly over the grinding-mill and the cauldron; and the merry laugh at the novel appearance of the motley throng, with the suppressed scream of delight from the timid maiden, arose frequently from the dark corners of the hovels. Preparations were making for hospitality on the most extensive scale. A successful foray had that very morning returned laden with spoil, and the

king of the Amhára had for once amply supplied the table of his revolted lieges.

Crowded around the cheerful blaze of a fierce fire that was crackling in the centre of the largest building, sat a score of persons, who were beguiling the time until the entertainment should be ready, by discussing the daring escape of Medóko, and the success which would assuredly attend the movement of the morrow. The dress of the greater number of these men was the usual cotton cloth, black and soiled with the grease of years; but the accumulated massive ivory rings upon the arm, the ostrich-feather floating over matted locks, and the spoils of the lion and the leopard dangling over the back, proclaimed the presence of the chieftains of the land. Their gaunt frames and supple limbs betokened a life of activity and endurance, and their restless eyes gleamed over the fire with all the quick suspicion of the savage.

The black bull-hide formed the only covering to the host of attendants that thronged behind their respective lords, and a few Amhára robes flaunted in white and crimson, amidst the sombre vestments of the Galla group. But Medóko and his sons, in stature above all their compeers, appeared in the full costume of the Christian warriors of Efát.

Decked in silver gauntlets and armlets, with the graceful *akodáma* hanging in glittering clusters over their manly brows, the master-spirits of the

scene were easily to be distinguished. The usual robe of peace had been well replaced by the skin of the tawny lion, which nearly reached the ground. Fastened on one side around the sinewy throat, it allowed full freedom to the right arm, and only partially concealed the rich silk vest, and loose kilt-like trowsers, which hung barely to the knee.

The kindling fuel of insurrection had indeed been well fanned—ancient wrongs were fully brought to mind, and vengeance was liberally promised. Few were there present who had not suffered either in person or in property, from the midnight appearance of the Christian despot. Hereditary feud and quarrel had therefore been laid aside on the soul-inspiring words of the chief, and the weapons had been eagerly seized in a common cause, at the thoughts of the devastation which ever marked the bloody track of the Amhára host.

These Galla tribes dwell with their horses in boundless prairies, engaged, some in the cultivation of the fruitful soil, and others in the pasturage of their numerous flocks, but all are ever ready on the moment to mount for the battle or the foray. Baggage and hospital are unknown to the wild array, and rations are found when required among the plundered herds of the enemy. A scrip of tobacco forms the only luxury in camp. A greasy cloth enfolds by day and night the body of each brawny savage. Lance, and sword, and shield, complete his equipment; and the hardy host, leader

and partisan, sleep without cover on the cold bare ground.

The wild hordes from the boundless plains of the Háwash, under the gigantic Wodage Girmé, first poured in their warriors. The depths of the Moolo Fálada forests next swelled the numbers, and the heights of Entótto and Sequála had completed the rebel force, eager for spoil and for revenge, which was ready to cover the land with desolation on the morrow.

The sacrifice to the Great Spirit had been that afternoon performed by the priest with every favourable result, and the preparations for the feast of departure were now completed. Bullocks and sheep were slaughtered by the score on the green meadow, and beside each carcass an abundance of bread and beer were deposited for the impatient guests, who immediately grouped around the food, and with keen knives commenced the attack. A long wicker table had been placed in the centre of the largest apartment, and deep earthen vessels, filled with thick pepper soup, were ranged in double line down the middle, whilst cakes of every description thickly covered the surface. The chief took his station at the top, and the guests were squatted on their hams on either side. Slave boys, on their knees, supported huge jars of sour beer, and the females, perched upon adjoining bedsteads, were ready to dole out the more potent liquor.

The steam of the bowls, containing a decoction of

fowls, red pepper, onions, and grease, together with the more offensive effluvia from fifty rancid heads and as many unwashed persons, were endured with the most stoical indifference; and the feeble light of a few tapers that glimmered faintly through the smoke, was just sufficient to reveal the rows of eager faces in earnest preparation, and the gleam of the sharp teeth whetting for the entertainment.

The hum of voices in low conversation ceased on the moment, when the host, dipping a fragment of bread into one of the large bowls, dropped the savoury morsel into his elevated mouth. Every hand forthwith felt its way to the provender, and the loud smacking of satisfied lips succeeded the suppressed chatter of tongues. Servants, bending over the guests, amply supplied their wants, by tearing the bread with their hands, and after a plunge into the porridge, consigning the dripping morsel to the first empty fingers that were protruded. No fork or spoon graced the festive board. No conversation now enlivened the scene. All sat like silent wolves engaged in a plentiful repast, considering that one thing at a time was sufficient for man.

The delicate raw meat was next introduced, and the dismembered limbs of sheep and oxen were placed as a dessert upon the groaning board. The servants threw themselves upon the flesh, and drawing their long crooked knives from their girdles, cut and hacked the bloody joints into small squares,

which were received from their fingers, and bolted with the greatest satisfaction, until nature cried enough. Then commenced the deep carouse. Horn after horn was drained. The presiding deities over the liquor jars were unceasingly employed in serving out their contents, and as the brain reeled under the influence of strong old mead, the words of contempt burst from every lip. "Who is the King of Shoa, that he should trample upon men braver than himself? Here is our protector and avenger. Medóko is our leader, and he alone shall be our king!" But the uproar, which for a time rose wildly from the hut, gradually died away as the horn was carried with a more unsteady hand to the mouth. Warrior after warrior stretched himself to sleep beside the cleanly picked relics of his reeking feast; and chief after chief, staggering a few paces from the table, drew his garment over his head, and resigned himself to a heavy slumber.

CHAPTER XVI.

MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS AT CHÉRKOS.

The verdant meadows of the Shoan district of Dággee are strangely crossed and intersected by low chains of barren rock, with here and there an isolated hillock crowned by the abode of the Christian farmer; whilst between each little eminence rolls the lazy brook, winding sluggishly over the flowery plain, as if reserving its energies for the thundering leap into the great chasm of the Chácha.

Broken, craggy, and desolate, this mighty abyss sinks upwards of a thousand feet abruptly from the plain. Its giant sides are in part slightly fringed with moss or sweet-scented thyme; and a few small huts dot the narrow ledges; but the wolf and the hyæna chiefly tenant the dark fissures, whilst the vulture screams her death note over the yawning gulf. Superstition has wrapped the beetling cliff and the gloomy ravine in her dark embrace, for here the captive toils in the bowels of the earth to procure the stubborn iron. The clang of the dreaded smith disturbs the stillness of day; and the chant of the hymn rises solemnly in the morning mist from the adjacent church of the Saviour, which stands

embosomed in a dark grove of junipers. Far down in the bottom, the Chácha appears like the small murmuring mill-stream, although the accumulated waters of a broad plateau are there rolling on to swell the mighty Nile; and at frequent intervals the mountain torrents pour their tribute over the frowning scarp, which for miles forms the impregnable fortification of the land.

Near the commencement of this stupendous precipice, and barely a gunshot from its brink, stands Angolláia, the Galla capital of the kingdom, commanding the upper pass into the Christian land. Three small hills which rise abruptly from the plain, and enclose a circular area, had been judiciously selected as a site by the wary founder, but the settlement was at this date in all the disorder of infancy. Only a few hundred hovels, composed of most flimsy materials, had been hastily erected on the sloping sides of two of the hillocks; but the smallest was distinguished by the more imposing edifice dedicated as a church to the Ark of the Holy Covenant, and its table summit was crowned with an ample residence for the Negoos.

A few trees raised their stunted heads above the thatch of the various kitchens and storehouses, which were crowded thick over the crest, and the flowering *umbár* threw a broad zone of fragrant lilac blossoms around the royal buildings. Stones and rocks, strewed plentifully in every direction by the hand of nature, formed a considerable impediment

to the rapid advance of horsemen; and stout heavy wooden palings, which descended in a double or treble row far down the slope, completely screened the inmates against any sudden surprise from the border foe.

A wide meadow stretches from the palace tumulus to the very brink of the abyss; and on the opposite height is situated the lovely village of Chérkos, which, from its beauty, had been formerly designated by the Galla "The Queen of the Hill." Sheltered by a magnificent grove of evergreens, the hamlet overlooked the pleasant slope which extends to the verge of the precipice, gaily diversified with rich fields of cultivation and plots of green pasture land. It had been captured from the heathen by the last king of Shoa; and although colonised by favourite Christians of the court, the revenues were bestowed upon the church of the Saviour, which had been erected immediately below the village, in the dark depths of the Chácha ravine, and which was now under the direction and guidance of Father Asrát.

The hazy sun had sunk beyond the dark waters of the muddy Nile; the rivulets were trickling in discoloured streams from the surrounding hillocks, to form a temporary lake in the enclosed amphitheatre, and each reeking thatch sent up its tribute to the cloud of thick mist, which was fast settling over the low hills of Angollála. The meadow brooks were swollen to the brim, and the long plains, brilliant with verdure, presented a pleasing

prospect to the eye, although a most treacherous surface to the incautious foot. The monsoon was indeed raging in violence over the land; and according to custom, the monarch, thinly attended by his household officers and establishment, alone occupied the palace. All the governors and great men had taken leave and departed to their respective provinces, the capital was well nigh deserted, and as night closed in, the few remaining serf inhabitants were seeking a dry corner in their frail huts, to shiver through the weary hours of darkness.

As the moan of the wind is heard preceding the coming storm, so the hum of a confused multitude first struck upon the practised ear of the vigilant. The alarm was quickly spread by the fierce baying of the dogs. The chant of the singer suddenly ceased within the palace, and the king, followed by all his attendants, rushed to the southern palisade. Then was distinctly heard the clattering of hoofs over the opposite heights above the Chácha, as the pagan host surrounded the devoted hamlet of Chérkòs. The glare of light and the faint wreath of smoke next succeeded, as the torch spread from hut to hut. The wind blew cold and gusty, and the flames wheeling in fearful eddies through the mist, revealed at intervals the cliff and the crag, and the peaceful church reposing amid the dark grove of junipers, hitherto unpolluted by the foot of the Gentile.

The wild shout of triumph, mingling with the

shrill shriek of despair, now rolled in fitful notes across the intervening plain. The whole firmament was illumined by the flames of the burning village, and they were witnessed in terror by the assembled inmates of the palace; for the sacred precincts of the church itself had now been invaded, and a group of priests in their last extremity could be distinctly seen, surrounded by a mass of the savage foe. But the next eddy of mist from the boiling cauldron that was interposed, shrouded the scene. The priest Asrát shuddered at the thoughts of his narrow escape, for he had only that morning quitted the sacred shelter. But the eyeball was in vain strained to see what was passing. Darkness rendered its efforts abortive. By degrees the flame expired, and one horrid shout of exultation from ten thousand wild throats rose over hill and dale, in earnest that the work of slaughter had been well finished for that night, and that numbers were not wanting for the morrow.

Hurry and confusion reigned throughout the capital. The king was advised to avail himself of the protection of darkness, and retire to Ankóber; but his evening dream had been pleasant, and he was buoyed up by the words of the strong monk. "Shall I leave my children in the day of their distress," he exclaimed, "and the seat of my fathers to be polluted by the accursed touch of the rebel? No; death is preferable to such disgrace." The royal gates opened to receive the terrified

inhabitants, who came flocking up the hill. Every matchlock was lowered from the walls of the great hall, and distributed amongst the young and able-bodied. Doors were barred and barricaded, and sufficient means of defence for a time seemed to have miraculously sprung from the untenanted location.

The pens of the scribes were now wielded with vigour; and as each tiny letter, or token, or entreaty, was handed for approval, the wild horseman mounted on the moment, and his long hair streamed in the night breeze, as, floundering through the muddy outlet, he dashed at speed over the eastern plain.

The pressing call for aid flew quick through the land. The love and the fear of the king brought governor and vassal to the rescue; and as hatred of the rebel's insolence stimulated even the dullest to action, long before morning numerous bands from the immediate vicinity had formed, on the meadow, a living barrier between the beleaguered monarch and his stern foe.

CHAPTER XVII.

BATTLE OF ANGOLLÁLA.

THE day dawned, and there remained nothing of the late beautiful village of Chérkos. Death and desolation had spread to the very gates of the capital, and the rocky ridge was covered with a dark mass of the Galla host. But the plains were too miry to support the weight of man and horse; and after an ineffectual attempt from one or two small parties, the cloud of war settled again upon the scene of slaughter.

Frightful indeed was the sight which met the gaze of the Amhára, as they took their position in front of the plundered village on the frowning scarp of the ravine. The opposite crags were studded with the mangled bodies of their murdered compatriots. Men, women, and children, had been ruthlessly sacrificed, and the thousand favoured inhabitants of a pleasant abode now lay stark and weltering among the rocks, where the strength of the fierce pagan had hurled them. The heaving of an arm here and there evinced that the spark of life still remained in some; but the chasm was impassable to the foot of man, and the wolf and

hyæna lay undisturbed, gorged and glutted after their reeking festival.

The sun shone brightly for the few days following the appearance of the heathen host, and the surface of the muddy meadow had recovered its wonted consistency. Both parties were anxious for the combat which was to decide the question of supremacy, for both were equally hard-pressed for the means of subsistence. With their usual reckless indifference to the future, the Galla had wasted the country, and rioted in its destruction. The supplies brought to the royal camp were nearly exhausted; and the king, galled by the presence of the rebellious array within sight of his capital, having now succeeded in assembling a much superior force, resolved upon giving battle on the morrow.

Prayers and psalms had been recited the livelong night—vows were made at every shrine in the kingdom—and the ark of the cathedral of St. Michael had been transported from Ankóber under a canopy of red cloth, to shed its holy influence over the Christian army. At an early hour the king, under the shade of the velvet umbrellas, surrounded by his chiefs, nobles, and high-priests, and preceded by kettle-drums and wind instruments, issued from the palace gateway, and with his band of matchlockmen, took up a position about a mile from the town.

During the night, detachments had been steadily

moving from every direction to this fixed point. Column after column streamed through the valley, or poured down the sloping hill; and as the day broke, the warriors of Amhára formed a deep line of horse and foot on either side of the monarch, one narrow plain and the river Chácha alone separating them from the enemy. Nor were the Galla in any way slow to take their station, bristling in a dark front along the opposite ridge, where the tall figure of the rebel was distinctly to be observed, marshalling his wild forces for the coming fray.

The battle commenced by repeated discharges from the king's gunmen; but the distance was too great for execution, and a shout of derision answered each impotent volley. The gigantic Tunkaiye first pressed forward to the close encounter, and the cavaliers of Shoa were not slow in following his example, for many fought under the eyes of their wives and children—all for the honour of the king, and the glory of true religion.

Down came the pagan host like the rushing blast, and the stones flew far under the clatter of their hoofs. But they were fiercely met by the long-bladed spears of the Amhára, and every inch of ground was for once stoutly contested. The roar of the foaming cataract, which thundered within fifty yards of the battle-field, was lost in the hoarse yells which rung through the air. The rocky bed proved for a time the scene of slaughter, and the turbid waters, receiving numbers of dying and

wounded wretches, hurried them to eternity. At length, each individual singling out his foe, the contest assumed the confused appearance of a chance medley. The sharp lance met with little opposition from the cotton robe; and deprived of other weapons, Christian and Galla, grappling stoutly together, fought with sword and knife, and in the fury of the moment, and in the excitement of the struggle, many rolled over the frowning scarp, clinging tightly together in the last embrace of death.

Medóko and his gallant sons were everywhere in the thickest of the fight. His shout, rising high over the storm, animated the faint-hearted, and his presence roused to new life and exertion the successful partisan. Many of the Amhára bands were already reeling from the repeated shock of the wild riders of the Háwash, when suddenly, in the very heat of the action, a large body of warriors, clothed in black mantles, and armed with long heavy spears, rushed down the hill on foot, and, prostrating themselves as they passed the royal umbrellas, descended fresh into the arena. The fierce inhabitants of Mans had sped to the rescue from their hereditary estates, and their savage ferocity and reckless bravery was well known throughout the land. The relations and the household retainers of the rebel attempted to breast the storm, but they were scattered like autumnal leaves before the angry blast; and the chief arrived to the succour only

to behold the spot strewed with the bodies of his stoutest partisans, and to witness his beloved son, the youthful Hailoo, sink before his eyes, transfixed by a dozen spear-blades. A panic seized the pagans; and, dismayed and broken-hearted, they fled tumultuously in every direction.

In vain Medóko performed the most incredible acts of valour—his voice had now lost its charm; and, crippled by a wound in his shoulder—his proud heart swelling with indignation—he at length perceived that the fortune of the day was not to be retrieved. Cutting his way single-handed through the squadrons of the enemy, he also gave the loose rein to his horse, and scoured over the hills.

The sun had reached the meridian when the hot pursuit commenced, and the arm of vengeance was not stayed until long after his sinking below the western horizon. Every Amhára spear was dripping in blood to the haft. The stain of gore was on every cheek, and as the weary warrior returned from the massacre, the chest of his jaded war-steed was ornamented with the cloth of the accursed Gentile, whose body he had left to the fangs of the wild beast.

After galloping for some miles with the few chiefs who had escaped from the fatal field, a short halt was allowed to refresh the horses, and Medóko proclaimed his intention of accompanying the party no further. Asylum and assistance were offered

in vain; the stout heart of the rebel had been quelled by the late heavy loss he had sustained, and for a time at least he bowed to the power of the monarch of Shoa. Short was the moment allowed for the explanation, and after a hurried parting and a hope for better days, the band mounted and pressed on.

Medóko and his surviving son Chára, now commenced the more difficult undertaking of threading their path back again among the advancing Amhára; but a perfect knowledge of the localities enabled them to take advantage of every hill and hollow. After many weary hours of anxiety they passed the capital undiscovered, and urging their horses to speed, took the road to Ankóber. The Beréza was swollen and unfordable, but their gallant steeds successfully breasted the rushing waters. The king's watchmen had left their cold posts, in order to take shelter from the cutting blast, before the riders swept down the rocky defile of the Cháka, towards the wooded sides of Mamrat; and long ere the voice of the brotherhood had risen in the matin chant, the rebels had been formally admitted to sanctuary, and were safely reposing in the sacred monastery of Affaf Woira.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAGIC END OF MEDÓKO.

In an open glade, at the foot of the great mountain range, stands the church of Affaf Woira, and the tenement of Abba Saláma, its superior, enclosed by a rough stone wall. Numerous huts are scattered in clusters over a wooded eminence, which rises on the steep side of the river, and here the indolent brothers,

> "Beneath the shade of melancholy boughs,
> Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time."

An air of the most perfect repose usually pervades the scene. The inmates are alike indifferent to the blast of winter and to the cares of life. Majestic trees tower high overhead, yielding undisturbed protection to the vulture and the white ibis. The "monk of the wood," the Guréza ape, there displays his variegated coat floating in peace amongst the mossy branches; and whilst every breath from beneath wafts up the perfumed air, the lazy monk of the monastery, during the entire day, basks in the sun amidst the bright flowers of nature's growth, gazing in apathy on the sparkling

stream which steals through the forest, half hid in a fringe of the willow and the bamboo.

But bustle and confusion for once disturbed this dreamy repose. The priests had been engaged in noisy choir, and the sacred drum had resounded since dawn of day. At length the portals of the hallowed edifice were thrown open, and the holy procession, under the thundering chorus of an Abyssinian psalm, moved over the bright green-sward. The gay umbrellas of the church, rich in satin and silver, led the van, and the corpulent Superior, in his white cotton robes, followed the insignia, bestriding a sleek mule decked in metal chains and tinkling bells. At his side marched the bearers of the straight falchions, sheathed in scabbards of polished silver. A band of priests followed, with their heads swathed in folds of white cotton, and their persons wrapped in black woollen cloaks, profusely studded with blood-red crosses and other emblems of Christianity; and closing the procession strode two hundred stout dirty monks, clothed in the skin of the wild antelope, with their shaven heads enveloped in dark greasy cloths, each carrying in his hand a small iron cross, and joining the tribute of his lusty throat to the deafening chant. Dell and dingle rung again as the psalm increased in violence, and the cavalcade, threading the intricacies of the wood, proceeded on its mission of mercy, to implore pardon for the rebel who had thrown himself on the protection of the monastery.

The conference with the monarch was long and stormy. The royal vengeance, though far from being appeased, was curbed by a fear of the Church, and more particularly so at the present juncture, when religious disputes regarding the two natures of Christ were beginning to excite an unusual ferment in many parts of the kingdom. An unwilling pardon was at length extorted, and the triumphant monks returned amidst the joyful acclamations of the female inhabitants of Shoa, whose shrill voices are raised on every possible occasion, and whose feelings were in the present instance enlisted in the behalf of their old favourite. The trip also would appear to have been profitable to the holy fathers, for it was currently reported that one half of the remaining wealth of Medóko was the stipulated price to be paid for this monastic intercession.

The nature of Abyssinian custom impels the humbled grandee to tempt again the slippery ladder of power; and disgraced for a time, the courtier, bending his neck to the misfortune, dances attendance on his capricious master until fickle fortune smiles upon his fallen condition. Unless enjoying the favour of the monarch, and basking in the sunshine of the court, he is held of no account whatever; and the quiet retirement of country life is despised and detested by a race who are ignorant of its pleasures, and possess neither amusements nor intellectual resources.

The property and estates of Medóko had not been

confiscated, and months rolled quietly along as day after day he took his station among the courtiers in waiting; but the eye of the monarch was turned in cold indifference upon his former favourite, and there were not wanting counsellors to whisper deeds of blood into his ear. Besides the father confessor, the haughty chief had other enemies who were chafed at the sight of the numerous band of well-equipped followers that Medóko still entertained upon his ample means. Many also had lost relations during the rebellion, and misfortune had not abated one atom of the imperious demeanour which ever characterised the chief.

The feast of Máskal was now approaching, and it being rumoured that honours and government were to be again bestowed upon "the murderer of the Amhára," as the rebel was denominated among the conspiring band, measures were taken to counteract the royal intention, if such had really been entertained. The most odious calumnies were industriously circulated; fresh accusations of disloyalty were daily carried to the palace; and the monarch, hourly assailed on every side, at length resolved to test the feelings of his vassal, by the offer of an inferior post in the unhealthy country of Giddem.

For the last time the gallant chief at the head of his followers swept up the palace hill of Angolála, and leaving, according to the etiquette, his son Chára, together with his retainers, in the middle

court-yard, where shields and spears must be deposited, Medóko crossed the enclosure, and alone and unattended entered the inner wicket.

On the several faces of the inner square are the entrances to the principal buildings of the palace. The great hall of entertainment on one side faces the king's stables on the other, and the artificers' workshops stand opposite the balcony of justice; but all are connected by stone walls and stout palisades, through which private wickets lead to the interior apartments. His Majesty had not yet taken his seat in public, but the usual throng of people were lounging about the yard, or seated on the rough bedsteads which line one corner, for the convenience of the great.

Medóko had hardly taken his solitary seat, when wreathed in smiles the father confessor approached his victim. Whispering in his ear the intentions of the king, he strongly advised him to reject the proposal with scorn; and no sooner had he ended than the four conspiring chiefs advanced from the interior, bearing the royal preferment to the country which was so thoroughly detested, and which had been hitherto offered only to men of low degree.

The royal presentation, although received with the impatient curl of the lip, and an indignant breathing from the distended nostril, was declined in courteous terms—"The slave of the king desires only to be near the person of his master."

But far different was the insolent answer carried back to the monarch, whose superstitious feelings were further irritated by the previous discourse and forebodings of the monk; for a black bullock had been discovered lying dead at the threshold of the gateway, portending that on that day an untimely fate awaited some one within the royal precincts.

For a time no word escaped the moody lip of the monarch. His features remained fixed and still; but a withering glance from his solitary eye shot over the band as he dismissed them from his presence with the cutting remark, "That they were all traitors alike, and lazy cravens to boot."

The hint was sufficient to Guffa Woosen, the *Dedj Agafári*, a man who stickled at no atrocity to gratify his master and to serve his own ends. After a hurried and mysterious consultation with six others equally unprincipled as himself, they proceeded together into the outer court-yard. Approaching by degrees, the band surrounded the bed of the chief, who was lulled into fatal security by a message that the king was about to appear to receive in person the refusal of office in Giddem, and whilst bandying a joke about the frail tenure of the dungeons of Góncho, five long-bladed knives were suddenly sheathed to the hilt in his brawny back.

Undaunted to the death, Medóko reared himself with difficulty from his couch, and his good sword

flashed instantaneously from the scabbard. He had been unwarily caught in the toils; but, like the wounded lion, he stood fiercely at bay, and some of the hunters paid dearly for their treacherous sport. In the hour of battle his sword had seldom required a second blow, and as the trenchant blade now fiercely descended into the neck of the chief conspirator, the head of Guffa Woosen for a moment drooped upon the shoulder, and in the next his lifeless trunk fell heavily to the ground. Again the ruddy steel gleamed overhead, but the energy was fast fleeting from the stout sinew, and Selúnko, although marked for life with a desperate slash over the face, succeeded with the remnant of his cowardly ruffians in basely escaping from the scene. A general rush and scramble now ensued for the tops of walls and houses; and from these elevated places of security, savage yells proclaimed the perpetration of the dastardly deed. The king seized a double-barrelled gun from the wall, lest the mighty warrior should attempt to storm the harem; and a high tribute was paid to the single arm which had thus cleared the court.

Desperately wounded, the chief now staggered across the yard, fainting and falling more than once ere he reached the gateway. No doorkeeper remained to dispute the egress, and as yet none dared to cross the path of the stricken brave. One little enclosure alone separated him from his devoted followers, but his strength was fast sinking

with the welling blood, and after swaying for a time from side to side, utterly exhausted, he fell, with a groan, upon his knee in the last pangs of death.

Tunkaiye, the great bulwark of the throne, was the first who recovered from the panic, and cautiously advancing with the chosen of the Amhára chivalry, he beheld through the wicket the situation of the chief. Rushing through the door, he dealt a blow from behind on the neck of the recumbent figure, and the head sunk to rise no more. One faint struggle of the right arm was alone to be distinguished, and one word was indistinctly murmured amidst the gurgling of the flowing blood; for the long knives of the assassins had penetrated into a brave heart, and the victory over the king's enemy had been already achieved.

Crowds now rushed to the spot, and the limbs were hacked to pieces by the miserable poltroons amidst the coarsest ribaldry and mirth. One wretch, as he thrust his crooked knife into the late brilliant eye, exclaimed, "How is it that my father now bears the bite without power to brush away the gnat?" and another, after succeeding with difficulty in hewing through the iron muscles of the stout arm, declared, with a laugh, that "the skin of an elephant was composed of less tough material."

Deprived of their weapons, and of the countenance of the mighty fallen, Medóko's son and followers surrendered on the first summons; and a dog, carrying

off his father's hand, brushed past young Chára as he entered the murderous court-yard. Stones and sticks were still being expended on the remains of mortality which were strewed in every direction. All human resemblance had already been entirely effaced, and a deep pool of blood remained to mark the dire tragedy.

To this hour the stain is settled upon the spot; and it is daily before the eyes of the perpetrators of the outrage. The stern warrior is never mentioned within the precincts of the palace, and rich offerings are continually made to all the churches in the land, to dissipate the unpleasant dreams which too frequently haunt the royal couch. But although the name is now used amongst the Amhára only to still the unruly child, the gallant Medóko is the darling theme of the roving Galla. The heathen female draws the long tress across her flashing eye at the recollection of his fate; and the chief yet thinks with respect of the brave spirit who could quell the feud and the intestine quarrel, and who had led the wild host with success, to spoil the dominions of the Christian despot.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GALLA BORDERS.—PROCLAMATION OF WAR.

SHORTLY after our departure from Ankóber, a robbery was committed in the residency; and the delinquents having been duly traced out by the Lebáshi, were sent in chains to Angollála, and incarcerated in one of the palace court-yards. The principal party proved to be a slave of the king, aided and abetted by a scribe, who had been for some time employed in copying manuscripts for Dr. Roth; and the greater portion of the stolen property was shortly returned by the hands of the chief smith, who succeeded the disgraced page in the office of *báldoraba*. "Strangers have visited me from a far country," was the message wherewith he was charged, "and whilst residing under my protection they have been plundered by my subjects. My name has become tarnished. I have beaten the culprits with sticks, and shall cut off the ears of the slave Wooseni, and sell him to the merchants of Hurrur."

Intercession, backed by presents, was successfully made with the king and queen, in behalf of the offender, a lad of ten years of age, and he was libe-

rated after severe castigation. "God must be angry with me," sobbed the juvenile thief, who had once before been detected beneath a bed with a pair of scissors in his possession—"God *must* be angry with me, for I have only twice attempted to rob, and on both occasions have I been punished."

Among the articles stolen, which consisted chiefly of beads, were sovereigns of William the Fourth and of Queen Victoria, and suspicions arising in the royal mind that these were not of gold, as asserted by Lieutenant Barker, His Majesty proposed testing the metal by the ordeal of fire. A coin of the former reign was accordingly thrust into the forge, and having then been immersed in water, was broken with a chisel by the conclave of smiths. "Call you this English gold?" exclaimed the Negoos: "here then is a piece of Abyssinian gold for you," —and throwing upon the ground the brass foil of a sword scabbard, he laughed immoderately. A fourpenny piece was then exhibited, as a somewhat more portable and commodious medium of exchange than blocks of fossil salt, and the figure on the obverse immediately elicited the inquiry whether the queens of England went forth with their armies to battle, since Britannia was equipped with spear and shield, and was about to set a *sàréti*[1] in her crown like the warrior king of the Amhára.

A quarrel of long standing between Ayto Melkoo

[1] The *saréti* is a sprig of wild asparagus worn in Shoa as a token of victory, as will be seen presently.

and the commander-in-chief of the gun-men, who ranked among the foremost of the court sycophants, had been this day brought for adjustment before the royal tribunal. The award being found in favour of the appellant, the Master of the Horse, although a great favourite, was handcuffed, and imprisoned in the brewery, but after a few hours' durance he was set at large, and his punishment commuted to a fine of seven hundred and fifty pieces of salt. "It is of no consequence," he remarked somewhat unwisely, "I shall carry a *mamalacha* to the 'commander,' Captain Harris, and he will pay the amount for me."

This boast had given occasion to malicious insinuations on the part of his enemies, and after dark a confidential message was brought to me from the palace, to the effect that Ayto Melkoo stood suspected of concealing certain "pleasing things" understood to have been received from my hands. But this imputation, which, if confirmed, must have involved disgrace and confiscation of property, proved, fortunately for the accused, to have no foundation.

A better instance could scarcely have been adduced to illustrate the fleeting and precarious nature of the despot's smiles. The mother of this tottering favourite, a native of Ambásel in the province of Lasta, was for many years the mistress of Hatzé Yasoo, then Emperor of Gondar, on whose demise she became an inmate of the seraglio of Asfa

Woosen. Ayto Wádi, the distinguished Galla governor of Angollála, being thrown into prison by the latter monarch, contrived to solace himself with the presence of the lady, and the Master of the Horse was the result of the intrigue. No disgrace whatever attaching to his illegitimate origin, he was regarded in the light of a member of the royal family; and, being brought up in the palace, has succeeded during three several reigns in maintaining a position at court, which might now have been sacrificed by the clandestine possession of a dozen ells of English broad-cloth. The *amende* was, nevertheless, made to him in the course of a few days, by the addition of another village to his landed possessions at Dóba.

Such paltry proofs of espionage were invariably followed by some especial token of the royal goodwill, ushered in by a goat, or a jar of honey, as a peace-offering. In this instance, after the despot had been fully satisfied of the groundless nature of his surmises, I received a special invitation to accompany him the next day on a shooting excursion, a Galla ram, the size of a well-grown calf, having first been thrust into the tent by the bearer of the message—the dirty page Besábeh—who, as usual, composed himself to sleep in a corner after the due performance of his errand.

Saturday, being the Jewish Sabbath, brings rest from all labour, and is invariably devoted by the king to excursions abroad. Starting on horseback

at an early hour, a gallop of several miles led us across the Chácha, and over the border of the Galla dependencies, to an extensive, but narrow sheet of water, where an otter had lately been seen. "It has hands, and nails, and fingers like a man," observed the monarch gravely, "and a head like a black dog, and a skin like velvet; and it builds its house at the bottom of the river, and plucks grass, and washes it in the water; and all my people thought it was the devil, and would destroy them with strong medicine. Now is this animal found in your country, and how do they call its name?"

We amused ourselves by killing snipe, much to the entertainment of the monarch, who displayed little talent for shooting birds on the wing, and made no secret of many very unsportsmanlike ideas. Numerous ducks and geese soon arrested his attention. Drawing up with his retinue, and resting his weapon over the shoulder of an attendant to insure steady aim, he kept up a murderous fire with ball, shot, and slugs, during a full half hour. The weather was passing cold, and ever and anon His Majesty blew his nose betwixt his thumb and fore-finger, and wiped them on the mantle of the governor of Bulga, who eagerly proffered it for acceptance. A serious diminution in the numerical strength of the feathered fools resulted in no attempt to take flight or even to shift position. Incredible though it may appear, the living still paddled among the floating carcasses of their slaughtered comrades, as if nothing

had happened, until the destroyer, weary of persecuting the "unclean birds," which were not even taken out of the water, remounted and crossed the country at speed to a wide meadow, traversed by the serpentine Chácha.

Bald coots were here playing at hide-and-seek, whilst red-headed divers peeped warily forth for an instant, as the noisy cavalcade advanced. The spoonbill, and the leather-necked ibis of Egyptian veneration, displayed their white plumage along the sedge-grown borders. The heron, the snakebird, and the redshank, waded through the shallow drifts; and geese, widgeon, teal, and mallard, rose whirring in the air at every step. But amidst all this inviting variety, the snowy egret was the object of the king's ambition; and although, after many unsuccessful attempts, he failed in adorning his head with her unsullied plumes, he retired perfectly satisfied with his skill as a rifleman, after a long stray shot had perforated the eye of an "*alata furda.*" This is a gigantic slate-coloured crane, with eccentric red wattles; and several pairs that were marching over the mead had previously elicited most notable displays of gunmanship on the part of Ayto Berkie and others of the royal favourites.

Abogáz Maritch, with his feudal train of Abitchu, joined the *cortége* as it passed Wona-badéra, his seat of government. The treeless expanse passed over —a type of the entire Galla territory north of Moolo-Fálada, where forest land commences—con-

sists of wide valleys clothed with a verdant carpet of grass, clover, and trefoil, which, from their redundant luxuriance, almost impede progress. Every little intersecting eminence is completely covered with flourishing fields of barley and wheat, and crowned with villages fortified with strong stockades; and one ancient *woira* excepted, whose venerable boughs formed in days gone by a trysting-place to the hostile pagans, not a single bush or tree was visible during the long ride.

An extensive barrier of loose stones hastily thrown up during the rebellion of Medóko, fortifies the south-eastern environs of Angollála; and although confessedly inferior to the great wall of China, it is calculated to offer temporary opposition to horsemen who are no Nimrods. Some of the lower parts were cleared by Captain Graham and myself without the slightest difficulty, and much to His Majesty's amazement; but every attempt on the part of the Amhára to follow our example proved a complete failure. On our return we passed through a palisaded wicket in this breastwork, which is dignified with the title of "the King's Gate," and forms the scene of the few public executions that take place. Chiefs and governors were also accorded the privilege of squeezing through with the crowned head, but followers and people of low degree were compelled by the stick of the doorkeeper to adopt a circuitous route over a belt of stony hills adjoining, which form a continuation of the defences.

The ascent to the palace was accomplished under a wild choral chant, laudatory of the monarch, which invariably announces his return from an excursion abroad. The road was lined with pilgrims clothed in yellow garments, and having each a cross of blue clay upon his forehead. They had been to perform their vows, or redeem their pledges left, at the sanctuary of Debra Libanos[2], chief seat of learning in Shoa, and the renowned scene of the miracles of Tekla Haïmanót, its founder. Hard pressed by his enemies, the patron and lawgiver of Æthiopia is said to have leapt through the trunk of a venerable tree, a seam in which yet vouches for the truth of the legend that it spontaneously clave asunder at his holy bidding, but closed to foil the sacrilegious assailants who sought his life. Being athirst, he prayed unto God, whereupon the archangel Michael, who was his mediator, caused a fountain to rise at his feet, supplied by the stream of the river Jordan. A cross which he carried in his hand had been swept away during the passage of a neighbouring torrent, but no sooner did he curse the waters, than they were dried up, and have never since flowed above the channel!

The remains of the saint still cast a halo over the spot in which they lie interred, and the pool which he blessed, retains to this day the property of cleansing the leper, and healing every disease on

[2] Mount Lebanon.

either of the three days annually devoted to the commemoration of his birth, death, and ascension. Famous as the most holy of shrines throughout Southern Abyssinia, men of every rank, from the monarch to the meanest peasant, if unable to repair thither in person, delegate their substitute with offerings according to their wealth. Having on his way bathed in the "Segga Wadúm," or "river of flesh and blood"—a tributary to the Nile, formed by the confluence of the Sána Robi and the Sána Boka—the pilgrim quaffs the waters of the mineral well, describes upon his forehead the sacred emblem of Christianity, and after kissing, at the adjacent church of St. Mary, a cross which is asserted by the priesthood to have fallen from heaven, he is secure against sickness and witchcraft. The very earth from Debra Libanos is carried away as an antidote to maladies, and all who meet the returning pilgrim, fall prostrate upon the ground, and kiss the dust from off his feet.

No sooner had His Majesty entered the palace-gate, than the sound of the imperial kettle-drum announced the presence of the herald, and crowds collected to listen to the royal edict. Standing upon the hill-side beneath the shadow of a solitary stunted tree, which, had it a tongue, could unfold many a tale of woe and oppression, he thus proclaimed in a loud voice to the multitude assembled; "Hear, oh, hear! Thus saith the King. Behold, we have foes, and would trample upon their necks.

Prepare ye every one for war. On the approaching festival of Abba Kinos, whoso faileth to present himself at Yeolo as a good and loyal subject, mounted, armed, and carrying provisions for twenty-one days, shall be held as a traitor, and shall forfeit his property during seven years."

CHAPTER XX.

A LECTURE ON PHYSIC.

The skill of the medical officers attached to the Embassy had already produced its effect upon a nation so ignorant of the healing art. Woizoro Indanch Yellum, aunt to His Majesty, arriving from Achun-Kurra on a visit to the court, was made the bearer of compliments on the part of Zénama Work[1], the Queen-dowager, "respecting the pardon of the delinquent slave." But they were accompanied by a request for medicine, and an admonition that the British guests of her son would do well not to squander all their drugs amongst those who knew not how to appreciate them. "We have seen wondrous things achieved in the time of Sáhela Selássie," concluded this message from "the golden shower,"—"and the prophecies respecting the red men have indeed fully come to pass."

The fame, too, of the operation performed with such singular success upon the governor of Mentshar had spread far and wide, and applications for surgical aid became daily more numerous—the

[1] i. e. Rain of gold.

patient, in lieu of tendering a fee, invariably insisting, when cured, upon the receipt of some reward. Priests, renowned for the sanctity of their lives, applied in the same breath for a white head-dress, and for a remedy against disorders superinduced "by eating the flesh of partridges." Even nuns did not disdain assistance, and many a hapless victim to Galla barbarity sought a cure for his irreparable misfortunes.

An exceedingly ill-favoured fellow, striding into the tent, exhibited a node upon the forehead, which he desired might be instantly removed. "The knife, the knife," he exclaimed; "off with it; my face is spoiled, and has become like that of a cow." A ruffian who, in a domestic brawl, had contrived to break the arm of his wife, entreated that it might be "mended;" and a wretched youth, whose leg had been fractured twelve months previously, was brought in a state of appalling emaciation, with the splinters protruding horribly. Amputation was proposed as the only resource, but the Master of the Horse was loud in his opposition. "Take my advice," he remonstrated, "and leave this business alone. If the boy dies, all will declare that the 'proprietor of the medicines' killed him—and furthermore, should he survive, it will be said the Almighty cured him."

In Shoa, the practice of surgery directs the removal of a carious tooth with the hammer, punch, and pincers of the blacksmith. Should

venesection be required, a stick placed in the patient's mouth is tightened by means of a thong passed round his neck, and the distended veins of the forehead are then opened with a razor. Cupping, performed by means of a horn exhausted by suction, is also extremely fashionable; and actual cautery, which is believed to strengthen the muscles of the spear arm, is applied by means either of a pile of lighted cotton, or a stick heated by rapid friction. Fractured bones that have united badly are said to be violently rebroken to admit of their being properly set; and upon the authority of Ayto Habti, the chief physician in ordinary, it may also be stated, that splinters coming away are successfully supplied by portions of the skull of a newly-slain sheep or goat!

But amulets and enchantments are by all classes held far more efficacious than the drugs of the Abyssinian "possessor of remedies[2]," which of a truth must be acknowledged to form but a feeble *materia medica*. Insanity, epilepsy, delirium, hysteria, St. Vitus's dance, and in fact all obstinate disorders for which no specific is known, are invariably ascribed to the influence of demons or sorcerers, and the patient is either declared to be possessed of a devil, or to labour under the disastrous consequences of inumbration by the shadow of an enemy. Shreds of blue paper are held to be

[2] *Bala medánit*, "the master of the medicines," is the term applied to every physician.

preservatives against headache, and the seeds of certain herbs are worn as charms against hydrophobia and disasters on a journey; but of these, some must be plucked with the left hand, and others with a finger on which there is a silver ring, and all under a fortunate horoscope, or they can avail nothing.

Small-pox frequently devastates the land, and a free boy of pure blood is then selected from among the number of the infected, and carefully secluded until the pustules are ripe. Many hundred persons assemble, and a layman, chosen for the rectitude of his life, having mixed the lymph with honey, proceeds to inoculate with a razor. Death is often the consequence of the clumsy operation, of the origin of which no tradition exists; neither has any charm been yet discovered to avert the scourge.

Whilst invalids of all classes daily flocked to my camp for medical assistance, applications were not wanting from the palace, in proof of the reputation that we had acquired. One of the princesses royal, who had been lodged with the illustrious guest from Achun-Kurra, in the crimson pavilion presented by the British Government, found herself in need of advice; and on being visited, lay concealed beneath the basket pedestal of a wicker dining-table, whence her sprained foot was thrust forth for inspection. Divers respectable duennas of the royal kitchen, who had been se-

verely scalded by the bursting of a pottage cauldron, were also treated with success when they had been given over by the body physician, at whose merciless hands the sobbing patients had been plastered over with honey and soot. A mutton bone was next extracted from the throat of a page, where it had been firmly wedged for three days. But the cure which elicited the most unqualified and universal amazement was that of a favourite Baalomaal[3], who, labouring under a fit of apoplexy, which had deprived him of animation, was suddenly revived by venesection, after fumigation with *ashkóko goomun*[4] had been tried without the smallest avail, and preparations were already commencing for his interment.

Medicine, in fact, now engrossed the royal attention. Phials and drugs without number were sent to the tent, with a request that they might be so labelled as to admit of the proper dose being administered to patients labouring under complaints, for the removal of which they were respectively adapted. Two or more invalids, who objected to be seen, were certain to arrive at the palace within every four and twenty hours; and no subterfuge that ingenuity could devise was left untried, by which to augment the already ample stock of pills on hand. "You will take care not to give the whole of the remedies to my people, or there will

[3] Officer of the royal household.

[4] Hyrax's cabbage.

be none left for myself, should I fall sick," was an almost daily message from the selfish despot. But prescriptions designed for his own use were invariably tried first upon a subject; and the much-dreaded goulard-wash having been once more prepared, directions were given to apply it constantly to a boy who had been found labouring under ophthalmia, in order to ascertain whether he died or survived.

The most particular inquiries were instituted relative to the mode of counteracting the influence of the evil eye, and much disappointment was expressed at the unavoidable intimation that Dr. Kirk's dispensary contained neither "the horn of a serpent," which is believed to afford an invaluable antidote against witchcraft, no preservative against wounds received in the battle-field, nor any nostrum for "those who go mad from looking at a black dog." "We princes also fear the small-pox," said His Majesty, "and therefore never tarry long in the same place. Nagási, my illustrious ancestor, suffered martyrdom from this scourge. Have you no medicine to drive it from myself?"

Vaccine lymph there was in abundance, but neither Christian, Moslem, nor Pagan had yet consented to make trial of its virtues. Glasses, hermetically sealed, betwixt which the perishable fluid had been deposited, were exhibited, and its use expounded. "No, no!" quoth the king, as he delivered the acquisition to his master of the horse,

with a strict injunction to have it carefully stitched in leather—"this is *talakh meddánit*, very potent medicine indeed; and henceforth I must wear it as a talisman against the evil that beset my forefathers."

"You must now give me the medicine which draws the vicious waters from the leg," resumed His Majesty, "and which is better than the earth from Mount Lebanon;—the medicine which disarms venomous snakes, and that which turns the grey hairs black;—the medicine to destroy the worm in the ear of the queen, which is ever burrowing deeper;—and, above all, the medicine of the seven colours, which so sharpens the intellects, as to enable him who swallows enough of it, to acquire every sort of knowledge without the slightest trouble. Furthermore, you will be careful to give my people *none of this*."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CAMPAIGN.

In common with all other African potentates, Sáhela Selássie never engages in war, induced either by public principles, or by national glory, and, least of all, by a love of his people. Whilst the fear of rebellion and disturbance at home deters him from attempting on a grand scale to resume the lost possessions of his ancestors, to wield the sceptre as they did, three hundred miles south of his present limits, and to re-unite the scattered remnants of Christian population who once acknowledged their supremacy—revenge, the almost invariable success attending his arms, and the insatiable love of plunder inherent in the breast of every savage, impel him thrice a year to gather his undisciplined militia, in order to undertake sudden and sweeping inroads, either for the purpose of chastising insurrection among the subjugated usurpers of portions of the ancient empire of Æthiopia, or of asserting his unstable authority over some neighbouring tribe that may heretofore have succeeded in maintaining its independence.

The wilds of Abyssinia are not easily explored

by the solitary traveller, and I therefore gladly embraced the opportunity of acquiring important information relative to the mode of Amhára warfare, as well as of visiting regions almost unknown. Superstition, policy, and fear, alike influenced the wily monarch in his expressed desire to be accompanied by his British guests. The presence of the stranger being considered to shed a blessing over the army, is invariably enforced by royal mandate, which extends indiscriminately to all residing within the kingdom; and whilst His Majesty, distrusting the sojourn in his undefended capital of so large a body of foreigners, sought the augmentation of his consequence in the eyes both of enemies and subjects, I indulged in the hope that the cause of humanity might be promoted by the check which the presence of the European invariably enforces upon the excited savage, during the revolting and sanguinary scenes of exulting victory.

From the fact of the army having provided rations for no more than twenty days, it was clearly impossible that operations should be directed against Lake Zooai, in Gurágué, distant from Angollála one hundred and fifty miles; and this circumstance fully explained the before incomprehensible indifference displayed by the Negoos to every preparation which might facilitate the advance of his troops. Keeping the secret of his real intentions fast locked in his own despotic breast, it is the invariable practice of His Majesty to publish a manifesto of the

approaching campaign, calculated to mislead his enemies; and he not unfrequently carries the deception so far, as to make three or four marches in a direction quite opposite to that in which he had inwardly resolved to strike the blow. None have the slightest idea in what quarter the thunderbolt is to fall, and as the fatal season draws nigh when the state revenues are to be levied, anxiously must throb the conscious bosom of that vassal who has fallen under the royal displeasure.

Beyond the removal of muskets and matchlocks from their pegs, to be oiled and exposed to the sun before the porch of the great audience hall, few signs of preparation were observable for the approaching foray. Angollála was indeed somewhat more populous than usual, and beggars more numerous and importunate. Wild Galla chieftains, too, were in attendance with propitiatory offerings and outstanding arrears of tribute, and the interior of the palace presented a scene of increased bustle and confusion. His Majesty was to be seen absorbed in the inspection of venerable pots, pans, and pipkins, which would have been esteemed invaluable contributions to the British Museum. Tailors, silks, tinsel, and satin, were in equal requisition towards the decoration of the imperial person, and the fat Master of the Horse, assisted by the *élite* of the household warriors, sat cobbling old leather with laudable assiduity for the edification of a whole host of eunuchs. But in the arsenal there

was no busy note of preparation such as is wont to precede European warfare; no crowding of light ordnance and heavy batteries; no commissariat, waggon-train, or sick carriage; and no interminable files of camels loading for the approaching march.

> "The steed,
> The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,"

had no place on the parade: the complicated and expensive equipment, and the munitions of the siege, were alike wanting; and although a few detachments were bivouacked on the adjacent meadow, and the black pall of a governor was here and there to be seen, it was still difficult even to conjecture whence the army of the despot was to spring.

Abject slaves to superstition, the Amhára never fail to consult the omens before setting out on a military expedition. Priests and monks are referred to by the monarch, and the accidental fall of the targe from a saddle bow, the alighting of a hooded crow in the path of a warrior, or the appearance of a white falcon with the tail towards him, are believed to augur unfavourably to success; whilst the flight of a pair of ravens in any direction, or the descent of a falcon with her head towards the army, are on the other hand esteemed certain prognostications of victory. For a full week prior to the opening of the projected campaign, the nocturnal howling of dogs had boded an inauspicious termination. One cur bayed at the moon as she rose; a

second and a third took up the vile note, and a doleful concert of hundreds gave birth in the mind of the Christian soldier to presage of coming evil.

Queen Besábesh was to await the issue of the foray at Angollala, and the command of the town meanwhile devolved upon the eunuch Wolda Mariam, with a garrison sufficient to deter visits on the part of the Galla, who have more than once attempted to burn the palace during such incursions into their territories. On the morning of the day appointed, a flourish of trumpets from the royal band proclaimed the exit of the Negoos from the palace, and shortly after sunrise the imperial crimson velvet umbrellas issued through the outer gateway at the head of a numerous procession. Crossing the meadow, His Majesty, resplendent in cloth of gold, took the road to the south by the wicket in the Galla wall, on which a strong advance picquet had already taken post. Every house in Angollála swelled the passing cavalcade; and each valley and hamlet in the environs marshalling its quota of mounted warriors, the nucleus of the incipient army, before advancing many miles, had become thick and dense. Abogáz Maretch with the Abitchu legion streamed from the stockaded hill of Wona-badéra, and a band of veterans occupying the summit of an adjacent rock meanwhile chanted the prowess of the royal warrior, who halted a few seconds in acknowledgment of their flattering eulogium.

Little order or arrangement is attempted during the first march, which invariably terminates at or near Yeolo, in order to afford time to stragglers to rejoin, or to admit of the return of those who may from any circumstance prove incapable of toil, or unprepared for the campaign. Immediately in advance of the army, screened beneath a canopy of scarlet broad-cloth, were borne on an ambling mule the Holy Scriptures and the ark of the cathedral of St. Michael, the miraculous virtues of which sacred emblem, throwing into shade those of the Palladium of Troy, are believed to ensure victory to the Christian host. Supported by the crimson *débaboch*, the king rode next upon a richly-caparisoned mule, a small space around the royal person being kept clear by the corps of shield-bearers, who were flanked on the right by fusileers and matchlockmen of the body-guard, and on the left by the band of kettle-drums on donkeys, with trumpets and wind instruments. Numerous governors, judges, monks, priests, and singers followed, and behind them rode a curious accompaniment to a martial expedition. Forty dames and damsels, professing the culinary art, with elaborately-crisped bee-hive wigs, greased faces bedaubed with ochre, and arched blue eyebrows, were muffled in crimson-striped robes of cotton—a demure assemblage rigorously guarded on all sides by austere eunuchs armed with long white wands. Beyond, far as the eye could pene trate the canopy of dust which hung over the

horizon, every hill and valley swarmed with masses of equestrians and pedestrians, warriors, henchmen, and camp-followers, sumpter horses, asses, and mules, laden with tents, horns of old mead, and bags of provisions—throngs of women carrying pitchers of beer and hydromel at their backs, and lads with glittering sheaves of spears upon their shoulders, leading gaily-caparisoned war-steeds—all mixed and crowded together in the most picturesque disorder and confusion.

After crossing the Chácha, the country to the south-west is no longer safe for a single traveller; and owing to the determined hostility of the various wild Galla tribes by which it is inhabited, small Amhára detachments would even find difficulty in passing. The road lay through an amphitheatre of low broken hills, rising amid rich meadows and fields, and clothed in parts with juniper or camel thorn, through dark groves of which peeped numerous tiny Galla hamlets—the distant landscape being bounded by the great blue mountain ranges of Bulga, Garra Gorphoo, and Sallála Moogher, collectively forming a crescent, but towering independently in isolated grandeur.

At the termination of the fifteenth mile, the ladies and their eunuchs, having hovered about for some time in uncertainty, finally settled down, like a flight of flamingoes, in a pretty secluded valley, through which winds the deep muddy Baróga. Their halt, and the selection made of a site for the royal

kitchen, proclaimed the encamping ground under a naturally scarped table-hill styled Gimbeė Bayéllo, which imparts its name to the spot. A fierce scramble for places ensued, and the several detachments bivouacking *sub divo* around the dingy palls of their respective leaders, which arose on the next minute, soon spread far and wide over every dell and meadow.

The centre of the straggling camp, which could not have measured less than five miles in diameter, was occupied by the royal suite of tents, consisting of a gay parti-coloured marquee of Turkish manufacture, surrounded by twelve ample awnings of black serge, over which floated five crimson pennons, surmounted by silver globes. Until these had been erected, and duly enclosed by an outer screen of cotton cloths, the Negoos, according to his wont, ascending an adjacent eminence, with all the principal chieftains and an escort of several hundred picked warriors, remained seated on a cushioned *alga;* and under the crimson canopy of the state umbrellas, watched the progress making towards his accommodation.

Horses abound in the kingdom of Shoa, as well as throughout the adjacent champaign country of the Galla; but save during the foray, they are rarely mounted by the indolent Amhára, the sure-footed mule being better adapted to his taste, and to the rugged hills that compose the greater portion of the frontier. The note of war, however, had so mate-

rially increased the value of the steed, that even the few horses we required had been obtained with difficulty. Every old, unsound, and vicious Rozinante in the realm was speciously presented, and in turn rejected, when Abogáz Maretch at length advertised his stud. Two hundred pieces of salt were the price fixed upon the first purchase; and as this *small change* was not procurable within thirty miles, and moreover would have formed the load of two jackasses, ten Austrian convention dollars were forwarded in lieu thereof, each valued at ten ámoles, and exhibiting all the requisite jewels in the star and coronet of Maria Theresa. "I have kept your silver," was the chief's reply, "because you have sent it; but in future when I sell you a horse, I shall expect you to pay me in salt."

In a country where even the hire of a porter is dependent upon the arbitrary caprice of the despotic sovereign, and where the inferiors of the court, entertaining one and all the most thorough contempt for truth, are lavish of promises without the smallest intention of performing them, no little difficulty had also been experienced in obtaining transport at so busy a season. Our preparations were therefore of an extremely limited nature, no member carrying aught save the scantiest bedding, whilst the general commissariat was restricted to a small bag of flour with the jerked flesh of two oxen that had been provided on the occasion from the royal herds. But orders for the supply of porters, who were not to be

hired, had only been issued at the very last moment, when the purveyor-general, with his customary liberality, reducing the kingly grant by one half, those finally furnished—three in number—proved barely sufficient for the carriage of rocket staves, medical stores, and surgical instruments required for the state service; the flimsy cotton awnings and scanty baggage of both officers and escort being reluctantly transported by a few hired domestics, or lashed with sharp leathern thongs upon the galled backs of feeble old pack-horses, purchased on emergency at the adjacent market of Bool Worki.

When contrasted with disciplined forces, the camp equipage of the rabble Amhára was small and portable indeed. A commissariat is unknown, every soldier and follower transporting his own provisions, which are limited to parched grain, or sun-dried flesh; and as, owing to the rapidity of the march, and the usual absence of opposition, the campaign is rarely protracted beyond a fortnight, this system has been found to answer. Governors and leaders alone occupy tents, whilst every component member of their respective quotas, in defiance of cold and rain, bivouacks upon the bare ground, with his head upon the shield, and no screen betwixt himself and the vault of heaven, save the clothes upon his back.

Strange was the sight presented as night closed over the first encampment of the chivalry of Shoa. Rockets were to be fired by the royal request to

instil terror into the breasts of the Galla hordes; and we had selected the peak which rose near the head-quarters, as being the most centrical site for the display. Ascending from below, the hum of the mighty host arose in the still clear atmosphere, and the gleam of the bright embers which ran through the depths of the valley, and danced over the intervening heights, until lost in the far distance, presented the appearance of a city of ancient days, whereof the great arteries being alone lit up during the nocturnal hours, full scope was allowed to the imagination to populate at pleasure the intervening gloom.

The appearance at Angollála of the muskets presented to His Majesty by the British Government had already caused no inconsiderable consternation, it being the generally received belief that the bayonet, hitherto a stranger in the land, formed a great receptacle for poisonous spells. The roar of each flight of "fire-rainers" now produced a panic from end to end of the scattered camp. A buzz and a clamour of voices followed each luminous ascent, to burst forth into a loud peal of wonder when the brilliant shower of meteors fell after the explosion. Confusion ensued; horses and mules, breaking from their pickets, scoured away in terror, pursued by henchman and warrior, their figures, flitting in dim perspective among the countless bale-fires, like shades called into existence by some magic agency; and the scene doubtless proved to the gazing monarch that

the political object in contemplation had been well and fully accomplished.

Habitual suspicion on the part of the despot inducing him to apprehend desertion to the enemy, the arms of the fusileers of the body-guard were piled, according to long-established usage, in one of the royal tents, and strongly guarded. The chiefs and nobles then sate down to a repast in the pavilion, where hydromel and beer and raw flesh were in regal profusion. As the horn circulated briskly, and the spirits of the guests mounted in proportion, it was curious to listen to the vaunts of coming prowess that arose from the board. No limit was placed upon the victims who were to be gathered to their fathers, and loyalty and devotion knew no bounds. "You are the adorners," stammered one, as the party broke up, who had been decorated by his English friends; "you gave me scarlet broadcloth, and behold I have reserved the gift for the present occasion. This garment will bring me signal success; for the pagan who espies a crimson cloak over the shoulder of the Ambára, believing him to be a warrior of distinguished valour, takes like an ass to his heels, and is speared without the slightest danger."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

Rome is said to have subdued the world under the direction of a hen and chickens, but the legions of Shoa and Efát are aroused to victory by the shrill crowing of a cock, which is invariably carried with the army, in one of the wicker baskets forming the pedestal of the banqueting table. One hundred and fifty-six choristers, termed *asmároch*, are entertained at the expense of the crown, upon extensive grants of land, to chant psalms and hymns each livelong night of the entire year. Twelve are brought on duty every month, and their vigils, which are invariably kept standing, are observed with more than usual strictness during the continuance of a military expedition. Throughout the hours of darkness their loud chorus arose from the pavilion without a moment's intermission, and their vocal labours around the holy ark ceased only with the approach of dawn.

Many detachments being still in the rear, a halt was proclaimed with a view to admit of their joining the head quarters, and the king, escorted by two thousand cavalry, made an excursion to a knoll at some distance from the encampment, whence on a

range stretching to the south-eastward, the hill of Dalófa was conspicuous. Hereon His Majesty has recently erected a palace, which he rarely visits except for the purpose of controlling by his presence the disaffected and turbulent Galla, whose continual outbreaks render it a far from agreeable place of residence. Gazing for hours over the extensive tract of rich meadow land which lay stretched like a map at his feet, the mind of the contemplative monarch, occasionally occupied by the administration of justice, appeared to be chiefly engrossed with the coming chapter of events, and to be abstractedly scanning the direction in which to pounce upon the surrounding foe.

The favourite dancing girl meanwhile attuning her shrill throat to song laudatory of her own vocal powers, and of her happy state of independence, in wild though far from pleasing notes carolled ever and anon as the spirit of the nightingale entered into her soul.

> "Care have I none, no flock to keep,
> Nor corn to grind, nor field to reap;
> 'Tis mine alone through the livelong day
> To charm the king with my roundelay.
>
> Task have I none, no toil to share,
> Nor wood to fetch, nor load to bear;
> 'Tis mine alone but to dance and sing,
> And drink to the health of my lord the king."

"Pity is it," remarked one of our party, "since

the damsel has so little to do, that she does not that little better."

"What fault have you to find with her performance?" growled the chief smith from beneath the ample folds of his lion skin cloak, enveloped in which he had composed himself to rest under the shadow of an adjacent bush;—"what fault have you to find with the king's *asmári?* She sings according to the fashion of her own country, and that is surely sufficient."

Early the ensuing morning the royal drums beat to saddle, and in half an hour the army, which had swelled meanwhile to about fifteen thousand fighting men, was in motion over a country especially favourable to its advance. Some military precautions were now observed. Large brigades of horse served as flanking parties, and the heights to the right and left were severally occupied, as the state umbrellas advanced over the level green sward. at the rate of three miles an hour. The king, with a few favourite chiefs, preceded by Ayto Berri, the quarter-master-general, and by the corps of guides escorting the holy ark and Book of the law, led the host, which, extending for miles and miles to the rear, came pouring over the hills, and down the valleys, like a swollen river bursting its banks, and overflowing the entire country.

The military system of Shoa being entirely feudal, each governor in the realm is required to furnish his contingent of militia in proportion to his landed

tenure—the peasantry being at all times ready for the foray, and expected to purvey horse, arms, and provisions, without payment from the state. Four hundred fusileers, bondsmen of the king, alone receive pay—eight pieces of salt, value twenty pence sterling, being disbursed annually to each, in addition to the food and raiment granted to every royal slave. Little discipline exists in the army thus composed, but considerable tact is evinced in its organization and distribution—small confidence being reposed in that portion which is not drawn from ancient possessions.

Of three grand divisions, the centre, commanded by His Majesty in person, consisted of the *Luguamioch*, under Ayto Melkoo, Master of the Horse; the *Gásha Shákri*, or shield-bearers, and the detachment of the collector of newly-levied tribute. Immediately on the left flank were the fusileers of Ayto Kátama, commander-in-chief of the body-guard, behind whom came the *Wotzbietoch*, or females of the royal kitchen;—then the legion of Ayto Guebroo, governor of Mentshar; and, lastly, the detachments of Shoa-Meda, of Morát, and Mo-rabïetie.

The van, consisting of skirmishers, is invariably led by the great governor of the subjugated Galla, under the title of *Worári*. With Abogáz Maretch, who now filled this important post, were the tried governors of Bulga, Kembibít, Góla, and Ootuba, whose respective detachments are Christians, and

who are all drawn from the neighbourhood, where intercourse with the Galla is most frequent. The third division, or rear-guard, is commanded by the general styled *Wobo*, who is arbitrarily chosen from the seats of seven governments in the north, viz. Giddem, Géshe, Antzochia, Mans, Káa, Gabriel, and Efrata—the same individual being never selected on two consecutive expeditions.

By the continual exercise of his staff, the Master of the Horse, assisted by the shield-bearers, contrived to preserve the proper distance between the van of the army and the royal person, but confusion reigned elsewhere. Warriors were huddled together without order or arrangement, and every trooper selecting his own position in the detachment to which he belonged, diverted himself by devising the death of the numerous hares that scampered through the army, and, strange to say, often threaded the maze of hoofs in safety.

During the early part of the march, herds of cattle grazing quietly in the pastures around various hamlets, proclaimed a subjugated tribe; and clans of tributary Galla, each led by its respective chief in some fantastic costume formerly received at the royal hands, met His Majesty at intervals, in order to present tribute either in horses or kine—the whole greasy band dismounting at a respectful distance on the flank, hurrying before the despot's path, and with bosoms bared, prostrating themselves simultaneously upon the earth. Little re-

spect, however, was paid to the standing crops—field after field of ripening corn being trampled level with the ground, in spite of the remonstrance of the disconsolate husbandmen, who, with heavy stones upon their heads, threw themselves at the feet of the king with loud and reiterated appeals.

The course was generally south-west, and conjecture was on the rack as to the scene of active operations and the ultimate destination of the army. But the secret still remaining with its royal leader, any new speculation on the subject did but elicit the old remark, "The belly of the master is not known." Choristers continued to beguile the tedious march with their rambling stanzas, and to pour out shrill strains of melody like the notes of the wild bird. The rough riders galloped before the van of the host to exhibit the paces of steeds received in tribute; and His Majesty, alighting ever and anon from his mule, reposed for a few minutes upon the cushioned *alga* which was carried in his train.

Nothing could be more tame and monotonous than the country passed over. Wide grassy undulations, interspersed with extensive cultivation, rose unrelieved by a single tree or other redeeming feature, save the many European flowers that wantoned beneath the joyous sunshine on the far-stretching prairie. The Karinza, the Fincha, the Chatti, and the Rufa rivers, all tributary to the Nile, were crossed in succession. Deep, narrow,

muddy channels intersecting verdant meadows, these presented the general character of all Galla streams, cutting silently through the rich dark soil, and leaving swampy quagmires on the waving downs. At long intervals the Negoos, dismounting to change mules, proceeded some distance on foot —an example followed by all. On the first of these occasions His Majesty went through the comedy of thrusting his feet into slippers, selected from a bag carried by a slave, which contained numerous pairs manufactured of various coloured morocco. Many were tried in succession, but the royal heels being invariably chafed and blistered, the experiment was finally abandoned in despair; and sacrificing dignity to comfort, the despot, like his liege subjects, advanced unshod.

For several hours not a horned head had been visible around the deserted hamlets; and late in the afternoon, when the van of the flagging army arrived in the extensive plain of Abai Deggar, completely environed by hills, the order was given to encamp, destroy, and plunder. Instantly ensued a rush from all quarters at full gallop. Flourishing fields of wheat, barley, and beans, the produce of the toil of a rebellious tribe, were ravaged and overrun by the locust hordes; and in the course of half an hour, the soil being stripped of every acre of cultivation, there commenced a general scramble for the rafters and ribs of houses, of which the skeletons were presently consigned to the flames.

The women of the royal kitchen had, as before, been the first to select a centrical and advantageous spot on which to pursue their important avocations; but some arbitrary change having been directed by His Majesty, who occupied his usual elevated position, the camp was thrown into confusion. Quarrels and scuffles might now be witnessed in every quarter. Those who had taken possession of a luxuriant pasture or the vicinage of water, stoutly defended the treasure against invading comrades, and recourse being had to weapons, sword cuts and broken heads were quite in fashion. Although now in an enemy's country, neither picket, vidette, nor sentry was mounted, and not the slightest precaution against nocturnal surprise was adopted towards the security of the camp.

But no advantage was taken of the Amhára neglect, and another and similar forced march over a country equally devoid of interest with the tract already crossed, led to the long narrow valley of Karábarek, at the foot of the Garra Gorphoo mountains. The bright spear-blades glittered through the cloud of stifling dust that marked the course of myriads over ploughed land. Green fields and smiling meadows quickly lost their bloom under the tramp of the steed; for no cultivation was now spared, and ruin and desolation were the order of the day. Straggling parties of the Sertie Galla had been seen crowning the heights that skirted the line of march, and near the peaked hill of Wyfun they

were assembled in numbers; but none ventured within half a mile of a host, twenty thousand in number, all thirsting alike for the blood of their enemies. Far and wide the country was laid waste, and every vestige of human habitation destroyed under the torch, the flames racing among the riper barley with the speed of a galloping horse; but the wretched inhabitants, aware of the approach of the spoiler, had abandoned their dwellings before the storm burst over them, and one aged man only had yet fallen into the merciless clutches of the invaders.

This prize had stained the hand of a follower of Ayto Gádel, governor of Chercha, a functionary far from being notorious for courageous bearing. On the occasion of Medóko's last advance, his was the mansion first beleaguered by the insurgents, but he fled in dismay, leaving his fair partner to defend the premises. Joining after the first day's march, he had put the most diverting questions relative to the English, with whose appearance he was greatly perplexed.

"Are these people pagans?" inquired the hero with owlish features, but too strongly indicative of his vacant mind.

"No."

"Are they Islams?"

"No."

"Then what are they?"

"Christians."

"Christians! Impossible. They observe no fast, and wear no *máteb* as a badge of their religion [1]. Is there any grass in their country?"

"Why not?"

"How did I know? Have they cattle?"

"Abundance."

"And sheep and goats?"

"Certainly."

"And their Negoos, does he carry *debaboch* [2], and make great *zumachas* [3] with warriors like these?"—turning his oyster eyes, lighted with something like martial fire, towards the countless rabble in the rear. But the party thus interrogated could keep his temper no longer; and as the little hunch-backed father confessor rode jauntily up with a dirty page perched on the crupper of his mule, to volunteer a lesson in the noble art of equitation, he galloped off, exclaiming with a sneer—

"Like these forsooth! One of Her Britannic Majesty's regiments would in a single hour sweep from off the face of the earth the whole undisciplined mob that swells the train of the boasted descendant of King Solomon."

[1] *Máteb*, i. e. Mark or token. The blue silk cord worn around the neck by the Christians of Shoa.

[2] Umbrellas of state. [3] Military expeditions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FORAY.

Thus far the greatest irregularity and confusion had prevailed among the Amhára troops, alike during the march and the encampment. A council of war was daily convened, when each leader made his report and received verbal instructions for his guidance; but no order of any sort was promulgated until the moment before it was to be carried into effect, and all depended rather upon the whim and caprice of the monarch than upon the exigencies of the service. The first intimation of intended march was conveyed by the royal drums sounding suddenly to saddle a quarter of an hour before the advance, which, as the state pavilion went down, was announced by a flourish of horns.

But notwithstanding that the strictest silence had been observed on the subject by the Negoos, as well as by all who might have been unavoidably admitted to his confidence, strong surmises were entertained that a foray from Karábarek was to be the order of the following day; and about two hours after midnight, the sudden and unusual cessation of the psalm singing, followed by the heavy tramp past

our tents of Ayto Shishigo's detachment of Shoa-Meda horse, confirming the opinion, the hum of the surrounding body, like that of a disturbed hive of bees, continued until dawn. No sooner was it light than His Majesty rode silently forth from his enclosure without beat of the *nugáreet*, and thousands instantly flocked towards the royal person.

The state umbrellas were encased in white bags, and the usual cumbrous Abyssinian robe, which effectually impedes all rapid movement, was on this occasion cast aside. Short wide trousers of various hues hung loosely to the knee. A thick white cloth girded up the loins. The skins of wild beasts, the lion, the panther, and the ocelot, alone hung over the brawny shoulder of the warrior; and, with exception of about two hundred musqueteers with bayonets fixed, every man-at-arms was equipped with spear, sword, and buckler, a mounted henchman behind many leading a spare charger.

At first starting the crush and confusion was truly terrific. Horses and mules rearing, kicking, and plunging, with lances bristling, and shields thumping in every direction, threatened instant destruction to each component member of the dense mass, which, crowded and locked fast together, streamed at a rapid trot after the king without the slightest order or regularity, save such as was preserved by the exertions of the shield-bearers who rode immediately behind. The occasional passage of ploughed land, producing a suffocating cloud of

dust, served still more to increase the confusion, which had reached its climax when a rivulet intersected the line of march. Steep perpendicular banks and treacherous channels opposing the extended front of the legion, and checking advance, a simultaneous exertion was made to gain the only practicable fords, which were in an instant filled to choking. The fiercest struggle for extrication ensued. Numbers floundering in the soft mud, or borne out of their saddles by the pressure of the crowd, were trampled under foot, whilst those who bestrode the stoutest steeds, clearing the way before them by sheer strength, forced their weaker neighbours to incline to the right and to the left, like frail reeds before the rush of the mountain deer.

The morning was bitterly cold. The hoar-frost lay thick and white upon the meadows; and as the rabble host trampled over the crisp grass towards the high range of Garra Gorphoo, which, at the distance of a few miles, rose to the height of twelve or fifteen hundred feet, the breath arose heavy from the nostril of man and beast, like a cloud of smoke, mixing with the dark columns of dust which followed the clattering hoofs of neighing war-steeds. During the first hour's advance up the valley, reports were continually being brought in, and messenger after messenger galloping off in every direction; and as the foot of the mountain was gained, Ayto Berkie, with a large detachment of the men of Bulga, leaving the main body, moved

upon the left, whilst the king struck up the steep face of the range in the centre of an extended line of men, who scoured every hill and hollow, and beat every nook and corner at a rapid pace.

Stretching thirty miles in length by about twelve or fifteen in breadth, the mountains of Garra Gorphoo, covered throughout with one sheet of rich cultivation, form the water-shed between the Nile and the Háwash. The various rivulets that on either side wind down towards the parent streams, intersect it into hundreds of verdant valleys, on the swelling slopes of which the white-roofed houses of secluded Galla hamlets peep forth among dark green groves of juniper and acacia, that add beauty to the fair prospect. These tropical highlands are inhabited by the Sertie tribe, who, long in a state of open rebellion, had rendered themselves doubly obnoxious to the despot, by attacking a detachment of Amhára the preceding year, of whom, whilst entangled in a morass near the foot of the range, eight hundred men were slain. The day of retribution had at length arrived. The object of the expedition, hitherto so carefully concealed, was now fully developed; and the military dispositions for sweeping destruction appeared to be right skilfully made.

Hurrying onward with ominous rapidity, slaughtering all who fell in their path, and with their weapons goading forward the herds of sleek cattle which teemed in every valley, the wild host now

poured like an overwhelming torrent down the flowery slopes—now breasted the steep sunny acclivity like flames driven before the wind—and now wound in Indian file along the edges of cliffs affording scanty footing for a wild cat, where the loose soil, crumbling at every step, left the naked precipitous rock as the only available passage. Far and wide the crops were laid prostrate, as if beaten down under the violence of the hurricane; and before ten o'clock, the highest pinnacle of the green range having been crowned, a wide prospect burst upon the eye.

A succession of richly cultivated plains dotted over with clusters of conical white houses, in parts surrounded by clumps of tall junipers, stretched away from the foot, the very picture of peace and plenty. Embosomed between the isolated peaks of Yérrur, Sequála, and the far-famed Entótto, lay the wide plain of Germáma, thickly peopled by the Ekka and Finfinni Galla, upon whose doomed heads the thunderbolt was next to fall; and full in its centre two placid silver lakes, like great mirrors, reflected back the rays of the morning sun across sheets of luxuriant cultivation, extending for miles, nearly ready for the sickle. Far beyond, the long wooded line of the Háwash, rolling its troubled waters towards the plain of the Adaïel, loomed indistinctly through the haze; and in the extreme distance, the lofty blue range of the Aroosi and Ittoo Galla, skirting the mysterious regions

of Guráguê, bounded the almost interminable prospect.

The morning mist, loaded with dust raised by the tramp of the Amhára steeds over acres of ploughed land, hung heavy on the slopes, and partially screening the approach of the locust army, conspired to enhance its success. Twenty thousand brawny warriors, in three divisions, covering many miles of country, and linked by detachments in every direction, pressed on towards the inviting goal—their hearts burning with the implacable hatred of hostile barbarians, and panting to consummate their bloody revenge. Taken entirely by surprise, their devoted victims lay helplessly before them, indulging in fatal dreams of happiness and security, alas! too speedily to be dispelled. Hundreds of cattle grazed in tempting herds over the flowery meads. Unconscious of danger, the unarmed husbandman pursued his peaceful occupation in the field; his wife and children carolled blithely over their ordinary household avocations; and the ascending sun shone bright on smiling valleys, which, long before his going down, were left tenanted only by the wolf and the vulture.

Preceded by the holy ark of St. Michael, veiled under its scarlet canopy, the king still led the van, closely attended by the father confessor, and by a band of priests, with whom having briefly conferred, he turned towards the expectant army, and pronounced the ominous words which were the well-

known signal for carrying fire and sword through the land—"May the God who is the God of my forefathers strengthen and absolve!" Rolling on like the waves of the mighty ocean, down poured the Amhára host among the rich glades and rural hamlets, at the heels of the flying inhabitants—trampling under foot the fields of ripening corn, in parts half reaped, and sweeping before them the vast herds of cattle which grazed untended in every direction. In the extreme distance their destructive progress was still marked by the red flames that burst forth in turn from the thatched roofs of each invaded village; and the havoc committed many miles to the right by the division of Abogáz Maretch, who was advancing parallel to the main body, and had been reinforced by the detachment under Ayto Shishigo, became equally manifest in numerous columns of white smoke, towering upwards to the azure firmament in rapid succession.

We followed close in the train of the Negoos, who halted for a few minutes on the eastern face of the range; and the eye of the despot gleamed bright with inward satisfaction, whilst watching through a telescope the progress of the flanking detachments, as they poured impetuously down the steep side of the mountain, and swept across the level plain with the fury of the blast of the Sirocco. A rapid detour to the westward in an hour disclosed the beautifully secluded valley of Finfinni, which, in addition to the artificial advan-

tage of high cultivation, and snug hamlets, boasted a large share of natural beauty. Meadows of the richest green turf, sparkling clear rivulets leaping down in sequestered cascades, with shady groves of the most magnificent juniper lining the slopes and waving their moss-grown branches above cheerful groups of circular wigwams, surrounded by implements of agriculture, proclaimed a district which had long escaped the hand of wrath. This had been selected as the spot for the royal plunder and spoliation; and the troops, animated by the presence of the monarch, now performed their bloody work with a sharp and unsparing knife—firing village after village, until the air was dark with smoke, mingled with the dust raised by the impetuous rush of man and horse.

The luckless inhabitants, taken quite by surprise, had barely time to abandon their property, and fly for their lives to the fastness of Entótto, which reared its protecting form at the distance of a few miles. The spear of the warrior searched every bush for the hunted foe. Women and girls were torn from their hiding places to be hurried into hopeless captivity. Old men and young were indiscriminately slain among the fields and groves; flocks and herds were driven off in triumph, and house after house was sacked and consigned to the flames. Each grim Amhára warrior vied with his comrade in the work of retributive destruction amongst the execrated Galla. Whole groups and families were surrounded and speared within the walled court-

yards, which were soon strewed with the bodies of the slain. Wretches who betook themselves to the open plain, were pursued and hunted down like wild beasts; and children of three and four years of age, who had been placed in the trees with a hope that they might escape observation, were included in the inexorable massacre, and pitilessly shot among the branches. In the course of two hours the division left the desolated valley laden with spoil, and carrying with them numbers of wailing females and orphan children, together with the barbarous trophies that had been stripped from the mangled bodies of their victims.

The hoarse scream of the vulture as she wheeled in funereal circles over this appalling scene of carnage and devastation, and the crackling of falling roofs and rafters from the consuming houses, alone disturbed the grave-like silence of the dreary and devoted spot, so lately resounding to the fiendish shouts and war-whoops of the excited warriors, and to the unpitied groans of their helpless captives. And as the exulting barbarians, followed by the curses of many homeless fugitives in Entótto, crossed the last range, gloomy columns of smoke, rising thick and dense to the darkened heavens, for miles in every direction, proclaimed that this recently so flourishing and beautiful location had, in a few brief hours, been utterly ruined, pillaged, and despoiled, as far as the means of ruthless man could effect its destruction.

The royal division crossed the deep vale of Fin-

finni by a most dangerous and difficult defile, leading over the bed of the principal torrent, which winds through an extensive belt of dark juniper forest, of truly magnificent growth. Lofty pine-like trees, hoary with the moss of centuries, towered above banks that rose some hundred feet almost perpendicularly, and were clothed throughout with tangled undergrowth. A huge fragment of porphyry, nearly choking the straitened descent, afforded barely sufficient room for the passage of a single horseman, whilst a succession of slippery rocks and treacherous pools filled up the channel to the opposite bank, steep, abrupt, and wooded.

Loud shouts drowned the pleasing murmur of a splashing waterfall; and so great was the confusion caused by the crush of men, horses and mules, mingled with frightened droves of oxen and sheep, all struggling tumultuously towards the only outlet, that many accidents occurred. Horses and riders were forced over the precipice—others were trampled under foot by the overwhelming rush from behind, and a handful of resolute men might with ease have kept at bay the whole rabble army of the invader. But the Abyssinian system of warfare consists in surprise and murder, not in battle or fair conflict. The king continued to advance rapidly without the smallest check, and being escorted only by a few fusileers of the body-guard, carrying each two rounds of ammunition, was necessarily much exposed; but confident in the terror with

which his meteor-like descent would inspire his unwary foes, no dispositions were made for the security of his person, in the event of resistance or surprise.

Emerging from the forest which extended two miles beyond the Finfinni defile, the scattered forces began to rendezvous around the state umbrellas, now unfurled, to which they were directed by the incessant beating of kettle-drums. Whilst the work of destruction still continued to rage on all sides, herd after herd of lowing beeves came pouring towards the royal standard, and each new foraging party brought with it fresh groups of captive women and girls. Some of the more braggart warriors affecting inability to return their blood-stained blades to the scabbard, pompously carried them in the hand unsheathed; and even the boyish arms of some of the most effeminate of the royal pages had proved victorious over a defenceless victim. The slaughter had been immense. Every desolated court-yard was crowded with the bodies of the slain—childhood and decrepit age had fared alike; and the murderers, unconscious of the disgrace attaching to unmanly deeds, unblushingly heralded their shame. Detailing their deeds of cruelty, they basked in the smiles of their savage and approving monarch, whose only eye became at times frightfully wild with excitement, although his demeanour throughout the long day of horrors was cool and self-possessed, from the experience that he had acquired during eighty-four similar forays.

After a brief halt, the march was resumed through the country of the Ekka Galla, which was clean swept with the besom of destruction; and the distinguishing green sprig of asparagus in the woolly heads of successful cavaliers became more and more numerous as the eventful day drew on to its close. The sun at length disappeared behind the western mountains, towards which the course of the army was directed; and night, casting her mantle over the dismal scene, stayed the arm of the warrior. During fourteen hours passed in the saddle, above fifty miles of country had been passed over; and the weary forces finally halted in the Ekka valley, without possessing the smallest idea of the position of the rear division, with the tents and baggage, to the leader of which no clue had been afforded as to the royal intentions.

Horses and mules were now turned loose among the standing beans; and several thousand head of cattle, tired to death with the distance they had been driven from their wonted pastures, were, with infinite difficulty, collected in a hollow, girdled on three sides by a deep ravine. It was closed on the fourth by a steep acclivity, on the summit of which the king, surrounded by his chieftains, took up his position for the night. His Majesty, although fasting throughout the day, sent his only loaf to be eaten by "his children;" and looking forth upon the fruits of his masterly foray, seemed, in the contemplation of the amassed herds, to be insensible

alike to the cold wintry blast, and to the long calls of hunger.

A wilder scene can scarcely be imagined than that presented by the nocturnal bivouac of the locust-like army of the Amhára, flushed by its recent success. Loud whoops and yells, arising from every quarter of the wide valley, mingled with the incessant lowing of kine, the bleating of sheep, the shrill neighing of the war-steed, and the occasional wailing of some captive maid. Groups of grim warriors, their hands embrued in the innocent blood of infancy, and their stern features lighted by the fitful flame, chuckling over the barbarous spoils they had won, vaunted their inhuman exploits, as they feasted greedily on raw and reeking carcasses. Spears and bucklers gleamed brightly around hundreds of bale-fires, composed of rafters stripped from the surrounding houses; and the whole distant landscape, red from the lurid glare reflected by scores of crackling hamlets, completed a picture worthy the pencil of the artist who delights in the delineation of brutal revelry. No sentry paced the environs of the straggling encampment—no watchword challenged the tramp of the man-at-arms. The deep hum of thousands gradually waned and died away, and each composed himself to slumber on the spot where his carousal had been held. A pall constructed with spears supporting a cotton robe, screened the person of the Negoos; and so long as the biting cold would

permit, we slept at broken intervals upon the bare ground, amid the gorged and weary warriors, the saddle of each serving for a pillow—

"The earth our bed, our canopy the sky."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ROYAL ACHIEVEMENT.

WELCOME to all was the first grey light that illumined the eastern sky, and summoned the warrior from his uneasy slumbers. So uncomfortably had the night been passed, that it was in truth rest to rise. The despot was among the first to abandon his cold couch; and a bulletin of success having been penned by the royal hand, for the information of Queen Besábesh, the main body of the division, convoying the interminable droves of cattle, was in motion across the Ekka valley. Escorted by five thousand cavalry, His Majesty then proceeded to a knoll at some distance within the scene of yesterday's carnage, upon the summit of which he tarried, whilst parties went out in search of the body of his grand-nephew, the youthful son of Ayto Besuehnech, who, with several others of the Christian host, had fallen in the running conflict.

It was a cool and lovely morning, and the mountain breeze played freshly down each opening glade. The ascending sunbeam danced over the steep rugged sides and ruined stone edifices of the fastness of Entótto, anciently the proud seat of Æthiopic

splendour, and still believed to conceal much of the wealth lost to the empire at the period of Graan's invasion, when Nebla Dengel was driven into Tigré. The great volcanic cone of Sequála, rivalling the lowland Aiúloo, was again visible in the distance, its once active crater converted by the revolutions of ages into an extensive lagoon, on the banks of which stands the celebrated shrine of Guebra Manfas Kedoos, a saint renowned for the destruction, by his prayers, of five hundred genies. On the one hand frowned the dark wooded slave mart of Roqué, in the Yerrur hill, where millions of Christians have been bought and sold; and on the other rose the mountain Dalácha, sacred to the Wato sorcerers, whose tempting demesnes have escaped pillage and conflagration, in consequence of their blessing having been followed by the birth of Sáhela Selássie. Far in the distance a low belt of vegetation screened the sleepy Háwash, and over the intervening tract numerous tributaries to the Casam, absorbed eventually in the parched plain of the Adaïel, conveyed the eastern drainage of Garra Gorphoo through the ravaged valley of Germáma.

Over this wide expanse not a living inhabitant was now to be seen. In every direction the blood-stained ground was strewed with the slaughtered foe, around whose disfigured corses groups of surfeited vultures flapped their foul wings, and screamed the death note. The embers of deserted villages smouldered over the scorched and blackened

plain. Ripe crops, which the morning before had gladdened the heart of the cultivator—now no more—were level with the ground. Flocks of sheep, untended by the shepherd, strayed over the lone meadow; and bands of howling dogs wandered up and down in fruitless quest of their lost masters. A single day had reduced to a wilderness the rich and flourishing vale of Germáma, including the dark forests of Finfinni, which for years had slept in peace; and their late numerous and unsuspecting population had in a few hours been swept from off the face of the earth by the devastating irruption of the barbarian Amhára hordes.

The remains of the fallen chief having, after much search, been recovered from the ashes of a still smoking village, were shrouded with a white cloth, and borne upon a bier from the scene of desolation. Glutted with booty, the despot now left his locusts to pursue their own course up the Ekka valley, where flames and plunder again marked their straggling return towards the mountains of Garra Gorphoo. Each hamlet was ravaged in succession; and cats, the sole remaining tenants of the deserted huts, were dislodged by the torch of the Wóbo.

For miles and miles the road was lined with dusty and wayworn warriors laden with spoil: flocks and herds, donkeys, mules, and horses, honeycombs, poultry, household utensils and farming gear, with captive women and children, indiscriminately mingled with the men-at-arms. Whilst some

of these latter, wounded and mutilated, were lashed upon the backs of their palfreys, others, dismounted, were dragging behind them their lame and exhausted steeds; sheep and goats, unable through fatigue to proceed, being cut limb from limb while still alive, and the bleeding trunks left quivering in the path by the wanton butchers.

Re-entering the mountains, across which the sun now cast the long dark shadows of evening, the camp was sought in vain; but the rear division, with tents and baggage, was at length descried pouring down the opposite height under a vast canopy of dust to the encamping ground at Boora Roofa. A long march the preceding day had brought it to Sululta near to Moolo Fálada, where it met and destroyed those who had fled from the immediate scene of the king's inroad, made numerous female captives, and, with the loss of the sumpter horses laden with horns of hydromel, acquired considerable booty; information casually received of the main division having thence led it back through the mountains to the present halting-ground, after all had made up their minds to another cold bivouac in the open air. During its more recent progress, this division had carried fire and sword through the country of the Sertie Galla, where it yet remained unplundered; and, as the day again closed, the vault of heaven was re-illumined by volumes of lurid smoke from the surrounding hamlets.

Such is the appalling retribution with which

Sáhela Selássie is wont to visit those rebel tribes who withhold the moderate tribute imposed upon them. The relinquishment to the crown of three or four hundred of the many thousand head of cattle captured during this and the preceding day, would, with some twenty or thirty horses, have averted this awful chastisement, the fearful consequence of taxation refused. The revolt of tribes inhabiting remote portions of His Majesty's dominions arises too frequently from the oppression of Galla governors, over whose proceedings he can exercise very inadequate control; but it is caused in a principal degree by the absence of outpost or fortification to hold his wild subjects in check. Could he be prevailed upon to abandon his present weak mode of securing the Galla dependencies, to strengthen them by those military arrangements for which the country is so peculiarly adapted, and to place a better limit upon the exactions of frontier governors, what bloodshed and misery might not be averted!

The army halted at Boora Roofa to enable straggling detachments to rejoin; and small parties went out in various directions to complete the work of demolition among the deserted hamlets of the Sertie tribe, some of which, embosomed deep among the mountain glens, had hitherto escaped attention: hives of ungathered honey, heaps of unwinnowed corn, and the half-flayed carcass abandoned within the filthy habitation, bearing ample testimony to

the precipitate flight of the hunted inmates, around many of whose bodies gaunt vultures already held their carnival.

Early during the forenoon, horsemen rode in to the royal pavilion with important intelligence, that Ayto Hierát, a favourite governor, had, at the distance of a few miles, surprised and surrounded a Galla in a tree, among the branches of which the caitiff awaited the arrival of the king. Impatient to wreathe his brow with new laurels, the monarch lost not a moment in sallying forth to destroy the unfortunate wretch, taking a most formidable array of single and double-barrelled guns and rifles of every calibre, together with an escort of five thousand cavalry.

Receiving a long shot through the thigh at the royal hands, whilst imperfectly ensconced among the foliage, the victim, abandoning all hope of escape, wisely cast away his weapons, and cried loudly for quarter; being admitted to which, he kissed the feet of His Majesty, and thus escaped his otherwise inevitable fate. To take the life of a Galla, and to secure a prisoner of either sex, are, in Amhára warfare, accounted one and the same thing; and although, where adult males are concerned, the more merciful alternative is rarely adopted, the despot, whose dreams often conjure up his past deeds of blood in judgment against him, has become more lenient than of yore. Yet the valuable presents to which the destruction of a

helpless foe entitles him from every governor in the realm, the increased respect acquired in the eyes of his subjects and warriors, and the additional lustre shed over his already chivalrous reputation by each new murder, however foul, induce him still to seek occasions such as this to embrue his hands in gore.

Messenger after messenger now galloped into camp at full speed, with the joyful tidings of the king's achievement, each new announcement eliciting yet louder and louder songs and shouts from the *wotzbeitoch,* eunuchs, and parasites at the royal quarters. In another hour the cavalcade returned in triumph, the wounded captive riding on a mule behind the exulting monarch, who, by virtue of his bold exploit, wore in the hair a large green branch of wild asparagus, whilst the greasy garment of his bleeding prisoner graced the proud neck of his war-steed. Repeated volleys of musketry, with the blasts of horns, and the din of kettle-drums, proclaimed the signal prowess of His Christian Majesty. Priests and women flocked to receive him with a clamour of acclamation, and he alighted amid the most stunning uproar.

Through the Master of the Horse I presently received a message to the effect that the attendance of every member of the Embassy had been looked for, the Galla having been entrapped purposely that his destruction might be accomplished by the hand of the King's British visiters, in view to the exaltation

of the national name. "Why tarried ye in the tent? I desired that my children might slay the heathen in the tree; but, when they came not, I myself performed the deed."

I informed the puissant monarch in reply, "that, independently of its being the Sabbath, and none of the party possessing the smallest inclination to destroy a defenceless human being under any circumstances, no public body was authorised by the law of nations to draw a sword offensively in any country not in open hostility with its own. That in Shoa an elephant was esteemed equivalent to forty armed Galla, and a wild buffalo to five; and of these much-dreaded animals we were ready to destroy any number that he might think proper to permit."

Great was the triumph and the quaffing of mead, and the feasting on raw beef, during the residue of the day and the early hours of the night, for, lo! the king of kings in single combat had prevailed over his Galla foe. Essential assistance had been afforded by the medical officers of the Embassy to the sick and wounded; amongst the latter, to a brother of the Queen; yet many reproaches were now abroad, in that its members had eaten the royal bread, and destroyed none of the enemies of the state. The example of other foreigners, who were represented to have shot Galla out of trees, was contrasted somewhat unfavourably to British courage; and a private of the artillery escort was roundly taxed with cowardice for permitting the

escape of an unarmed peasant, who lay concealed in a bush by the way-side, and could have offered no resistance. The defenceless wretch was subsequently pursued by thirty Amhára horsemen, but escaped unscathed on foot into the forest, under a shower of their Christian lances.

In all countries where a martial spirit is fostered by continual forays, and where the exertions of a single day are sufficient to maintain the successful marauder for six months to come, the daily unceasing labour of the cultivator is forsaken for the shield and spear. But in Abyssinia, where the principal booty is monopolised by the monarch, the case is widely different, since, although military expeditions are of frequent occurrence, the sword of the plunderer is as often turned again into the ploughshare—whilst the despoiled husbandman, again tilling his devastated lands, and occupying the brief intervals of peace and repose in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, the fair provinces of the Galla, flowing with milk and honey, are speedily reclothed in one sheet of luxuriant cultivation.

The Abyssinians have been represented as a bold, martial, and chivalrous race—but in Shoa the "champions of the Cross" are impelled by none of that knightly valour which warmed the breast of the crusader of old. The white feather, that emblem of cowardice in other lands, forms the boast of their murderous exploits; and the system of the noble art of war would seem to consist in the mer-

ciless destruction of the enemy by sudden inroad and surprise. Harrying the invaded country with overwhelming masses of undisciplined cavalry, the only opposition to be encountered is an occasional skirmish during the night with an outlying detachment, or by day during the passage of a weak body through morasses or intricate defiles. The appearance of a foe invariably proves the signal for increased disorder, all who are so disposed sallying forth to the assault, when those who harbour animosity against a comrade not unfrequently avail themselves of the opportunity to assassinate him in the *mêlée*.

Cruelties emanating from the hereditary detestation of the heathen, which, with the barbarous spoils earned during the foray, is handed down as an heir-loom from generation to generation, are unfortunately countenanced by the monarch, who has too often personally set the disgraceful example of mutilation; whilst the bigotry and superstition of the savage Amhára induces him to regard every pagan in the light of a dog, as doth the fanatic Moslem the Christian. The revolting barbarities practised in the hour of victory, which from time immemorial have had existence in Æthiopia, and unfortunately also over the greater portion of unhappy Africa to which discovery has yet extended, are perpetuated by the commission of similar enormities on the part of the Galla usurpers of the fairest portions of the land, who butcher children

and old men without distinction, mutilate all who fall into their hands, and enslave females upon every opportunity.

The rapid muster of the Amhára under their respective chieftains, the disorderly march, the rude, but for the purpose sufficient tactics, with the slaughter and devastation consequent upon success, forcibly bring to mind the wars of feudal Europe. The stimulus afforded by individual interest in the murders committed during the foray stands at present in the place of discipline, since without one or the other no army could be brought into the field. Triumph attends the return of the Christian warrior from battle in proportion to the number of lives he bears upon his arm, and for each enemy slain he is entitled to some conspicuous personal badge, which forms his greatest pride. A ring, a gauntlet, or a bracélet, gained at the expense of acts the most dastardly, raises him accordingly in the estimation of relatives and companions in arms, and signal success almost invariably paves the way to royal preferment.

Discipline alone can check the prevailing barbarity, by superseding desultory hand to hand combat, and keeping every soldier in such comparative ignorance of the number that fall to his individual prowess, as to preclude the vaunting of exploits. To those especially who have been eye-witnesses of such a foray, it must afford matter for deep regret that feud and contest should hitherto so

effectually have debarred access to the interior, and should have checked the advance of Christianity and civilization, which, as in happier lands, must bring with them the means of providing for redundant population, and could not fail to ameliorate the horrors attendant upon the existing system of Abyssinian warfare.

CHAPTER XXV.

LIBERATION OF THE PRISONERS OF WAR.

During the more than usually successful campaign of the Amhára host, an opportunity was afforded us of laying down as scientifically as very limited time would permit, an extensive and most interesting tract of country hitherto scarcely known—not to be explored by the adventurous but single traveller, and only to be visited under the peculiar advantages afforded to the British Embassy by the despotic Negoos. We were all much disappointed that this acquaintance should not have extended to the Lake Zooai, as anticipated from the manifesto originally promulgated at Machal-wans; but Ayto Bérri, many years Quarter-master-general of the royal troops, who, in his *quondam* capacity of Mohammadan rover, had often visited that famous expanse of water, strongly discountenanced the contemplated measure of molesting the inoffensive inhabitants of its five islands—mixed Christians and pagans living in profound peace with each other, and with every surrounding neighbour. To his advice may in some measure be ascribed the alteration in the king's intentions; but the argument which had pro-

bably more weight with His Majesty than the harmless attributes of the population, was based on the dense and difficult character of the extensive forests, swarming with Galla and with wild beasts, through which the army must pass, after crossing the pillaged valley of Germáma.

The Christian camp at Boora Roofa was crowded with disconsolate groups of heathen captives, many with infants at their backs, and nearly all in a state of nudity, with long raven tresses streaming wildly over their shoulders. Hopeless slavery was theirs; but influenced by my earnest remonstrance, aided by the active and reverend missionary, Dr. Krapf, whom philanthropic feelings had enabled to endure the uncongenial atmosphere of ignorance and unbelief—whom the purest and most praiseworthy motives had induced to obey the royal summons to the field, and who, from his long experience, knew when to touch the latent spark of mercy,—the king wiped out the foul stain of the preceding day by consenting to liberate the whole. Ere the *nugáreet* sounded the return of the troops, a proclamation went forth commanding the immediate release of every prisoner of war; and as the dissatisfied army turned its back upon the valley, long files of widowed dames and fatherless girls were to be seen hurrying in freedom across the hills towards their desolate hearths, overjoyed at the sudden and unexpected restoration of their liberty through the white man's intercession—the ruthless soldiery, dis-

appointed at the loss of their booty, having previously stripped the last covering from all, and sent them forth naked as they came into the world.

It would be superfluous to dwell upon the satisfaction which filled the breast of every member of the Embassy, at this signal victory over savage ferocity; and heartfelt were the congratulations on all sides, that Providence had permitted us to be thus instrumental in ameliorating the condition of so large a number of our fellow-creatures.

A long march brought us the same day to the river Alelta, a tributary to the Nile, and forming near the encampment Lake Sertie, a full mile in diameter, bounded by low hills of trachyte and porphyry. A web of deep miry ravines, shut in by high crumbling banks, presented a wet and slippery footing, and many were the disasters that befel the demure dames of the royal kitchen. Wicker parasols might be seen floating down the current as the luckless proprietors struggled in the black slimy mud among mules and war-steeds, or emerged in truly pitiable condition to be censured by the austere guardians, who, horror-stricken, had witnessed from above the absence of all order and decorum.

Each moment rendered the treacherous passage more and more impracticable; and it was not difficult to understand how, in the month of June the preceding year, the spot should have proved the grave of eight hundred of the Amhára cavalry. At

that season the country, flooded for many miles around, becomes one great quagmire, which is not to be crossed without extreme caution. Before the king had passed with the main body of the victorious troops escorting immense plunder, the Sertie Galla, taking advantage of superior knowledge of the locality, completely cut off the van of the army, consisting of the Mentshar and Bulga detachments. They had become entangled in the mazy labyrinth, and were massacred to a man ere assistance could be rendered by the matchlockmen of the body-guard, who did not reach the ground until the enemy were in full retreat.

His Majesty's object in now revisiting the scene of this catastrophe was sufficiently obvious. No sooner had the imperial cavalcade halted among the bleached skeletons of the fallen warriors, than champions, whose steeds were distinguished by greasy garments stripped from the bodies of Galla victims, caracoled proudly in front of the state umbrellas, brandishing their bright weapons aloft—exhibiting the human fragments that had been won during the recent bloody foray—and after a detail of their individual exploits, shouting defiance to the humbled Sertie. The wild triumphal exhibition concluding after half an hour, a band of music advanced, and continued to play until the pavilion had been prepared for the royal reception.

Early the ensuing morning the king sent confidentially to my tent, to inquire if none of his

guests could divine whether the day were propitious to the advance of the army—a point upon which he felt somewhat dubious. Our confession of lamentable want of skill in augury was succeeded by a march of sixteen miles to Ellulee Jidda over a monotonous landscape of swelling downs and shallow valleys, intersected by streamlets that had scooped deep channels in the loose black soil. The stately relict of a deceased Galla chieftain rode through the ranks with her tribute in horses and kine, and experienced a most gallant reception at the hands of the monarch. She might have sat for the portrait of La Belle Sauvage, but the grease wherein the person of the handsome dame was embedded, tended unfortunately to destroy the romance inseparable from her Amazonian appearance and feudal condition.

Various triumphant detachments also met the royal cortège *en route*, the chiefs and victorious warriors careering in succession before the van of the army, with green sprigs of asparagus waving above their dishevelled and newly-dressed locks. Prisoners were seated behind the cruppers of some of the more merciful, and the flank of each grey steed was dyed with clotted human gore. A short rambling recitative, expressive of loyalty and devotion in the field, was followed by savage yells and whoops, twice or thrice re-echoed by their marshalled band of followers, when they vaulted lightly from the saddle, prostrated themselves on the

ground, and galloped off, each in his turn, to make way for some new squadron, whose war chorus came pealing over the hills—

> "The combat's past, the fight is won,
> Then triumph o'er the prostrate foe;
> The heathen blood has freely run,
> Raise high the chaunt, Wokó, Wokó.
>
> Let hill and dale return the note,
> Wokó, Wokó, ayâh Wokó;
> Loud ring from every Christian throat
> The shout of death, Wokó, Wokó."

Whilst the army was encamping, the legion of Ayto Shishigo, rejoining the royal division with three thousand head of oxen, in like manner reported their successful exploits to the king, who, as usual, occupied the summit of an adjacent eminence. Tribute was still in a course of diligent collection, and Galla chieftains, with their hair plaited after the model of the lotus-flower, were flocking with their dues from all directions. One refractory village only, of the Jidda tribe, withholding its impost of a single horse, paid the penalty of its folly. The inhabitants fled, but their deserted houses were sacked and consigned to the flames, the stakes and palisades by which, in common with every hamlet in this direction, it was strongly fortified, affording fuel for the royal kitchen, and subsequently a scramble to one half of the army.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRIUMPH.

A LONG march across the Sana Robi next brought the troops to Belát, in the neighbourhood of Yeolo. His Majesty, seated upon his cushioned *alga*, halted frequently in the wide undulating meadows to witness warlike rehearsals on a still more splendid scale; on the termination of which, many of the quotas having received their dismissal, dispersed to their respective districts, although not until after one Amhára soldier had been treacherously murdered by a rival comrade, and another had been desperately wounded in a trifling dispute.

Before sunrise the ensuing morning the victorious troops, reduced by one third, marched upon Angollála, driving exultingly before them upwards of thirty thousand head of cattle, the entire of which were, *par excellence*, the property of the king. Arrived within sight of the capital, strains of martial music burst from the centre division, when every throat throughout the vast army joined in one deafening chorus. Half a mile to the south of the Galla wall a tent had been erected, to which His Majesty retiring for a few minutes, arrayed

himself preparatory to the triumphal entry; and the various leaders, at the head of their respective squadrons, meanwhile took up the position allotted in the coming pageant.

As the state umbrellas, preceded by the ark of St. Michael, passed through the Ankóber gate of the defences, the assembled chiefs and warriors who had been most distinguished during the successful foray, arrayed in the glittering badges of former achievements in arms, placed themselves in advance. One hundred gore-stained steeds, resplendent with trappings and brass ornaments, and fancifully caparisoned in gay cloths and chintz housings, bounded and pranced gallantly under this chosen band of proud cavaliers, who, with lances couched, and party-coloured robes flaunting in the wind, slowly curvetted over the verdant carpet of turf. Their glossy black hair, loaded with feathers and green branches in token of recent triumph, and their variously emblazoned shields, glancing brightly in the sun-beams, they rent the air with shrill whoops and yells, responded at frequent intervals by loud shouts of welcome from the palace, and from all parts of the town; whilst the dense phalanx of warriors in the rear—their forest of lances partially obscured under a thick canopy of dust—pressing tumultuously forward, and pouring the wildest war-songs from ten thousand throats, completed one of the most brilliant and savage exhibitions that can be conceived.

The king was enrobed in the ample spoils of a noble lion, richly ornamented, and half concealing beneath their tawny folds an embroidered green mantle of Indian manufacture. On his right shoulder he wore three chains of gold as a symbol of the Holy Trinity, and the fresh-plucked bough of asparagus, which denoted his recent exploit, rose from the centre of an embossed coronet of silver. His dappled war-steed, bedizened with housings of blue and yellow, was led prancing beside him, and immediately in advance bounded the champion, on a coal-black charger, bearing the imperial shield of massive silver, with the sacred emblem of Christianity in high relief, whilst his long plaited raven locks floated wildly behind, over the spotted hide of a panther, by which his broad shoulders were graced. Abogáz Maretch and Ayto Berkie rode on either side of the crimson *debáboch*, and a marshalled line of shield-bearers, under the Master of the Horse, preserved a clear space around the royal person until the cavalcade had gained the stockaded knoll, upon the summit of which the palace is erected.

Here a deputation of priests, clad in snow-white garments, received the victorious monarch with a blessing, and under a volley of musketry, His Majesty proceeded to ascend. The outer court was crowded with female slaves, beggars, and menials, who, on the first appearance of the umbrellas within the gate, greeted the royal return with the

shrillest clamour, and cast themselves prostrate in the dust. Fusileers and matchlockmen of the imperial body-guard lined the second palisaded enclosure, and under a *feu-de-joie*, their leader, performing the war-dance before the holy ark, led the procession to the last enclosure, where the king being met by the eunuchs of the royal household, entered the palace by a private door, and surrounded by pages and attendants, presently took seat in a high latticed balcony fronting the inner quadrangle.

Full in the centre stood a gigantic drum, whereat twelve old hags thumped unceasingly with crossed hands, keeping time energetically with their feet, whilst, under the most frightful contortions and gesticulations, they cursed and screamed defiance to the enemies of the state. Sixty concubines, their faces besmeared with red ochre and grease, and their frizzled locks white under a coat of lard, sang and danced with increasing vehemence their shrill melody, regulated by the drum, now dwindling into recitative, now bursting forth into a deafening chorus. Around this strange group, the dismounted cavaliers formed fifteen deep, and filling the entire court, poised each his trophy of blood aloft upon the glittering point of his lance; and as the whole danced, and whooped, and howled like wild beasts, warrior after warrior, springing with a fiendish yell into the centre of the ring, cast his prize contemptuously upon the ground, and

kissing the dust, did abject homage at the feet of the triumphant despot.

"Behold in me the king's great warrior," now resounded from every quarter. "I it was who slew his enemy in the open field, or speared him in the burning hut. May victory ever attend his armies in the battle! May Sáhela Selássie reign for ever!" A general shout and clashing of shields, with the sudden cessation of the wild music, announced the close of this savage pageant. The curtain dropped before the monarch, and, as the actors dispersed rapidly to the right and to the left, the discharge of an old dismounted iron gun, which, vertically elevated against a stone, was revealed at the further extremity of the court, announced to the public that the tragedy of "the Royal Robber" had been performed with the most brilliant success, and would be repeated again during the season.

Rumours of the destruction of the entire Christian host had flown to Angollála in consequence of the Negoos having, for the first time in his life, passed the night apart from his baggage; and the grief and consternation which prevailed during six days, had only been dispelled by the unexpected and triumphant return of the victorious army. Evil omens had, indeed, resounded through the departing camp, but destiny had been satisfied with a youthful scion of the royal stock; and although the weapons of a lost descendant of the house of

Solomon adorned the rude walls of the pagan Galla, still fire and sword had ravaged their fair country; and the rich booty with which the adjacent meadows were profusely dotted, proclaimed a harvest which, during thirty years, and eighty-four successive expeditions, had not been eclipsed in the annals of Amhára bloodshed and rapine.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NUPTIALS IN HIGH LIFE.

Ayto Hïerat's crime brought its own punishment. The prominent part he had taken in the event at Boora Roofa, which had so recently covered his royal master with glory, could hardly be suffered to pass unrequited, and three days after the return of the expedition to Angollála, he was accordingly honoured with the hand of Woïzoro Belete Shatchau[1], a shrew possessing the most diabolical of tempers, whom two husbands had already divorced, although a princess of the blood royal.

On the morning appointed for the nuptials, we received an early summons to the palace, in order to witness the ceremony. The throne was tricked out with unusual gaiety for the occasion, and the king, covering his mouth with a fold of his striped mantle according to undeviating wont, was still in the hands of the barber, who, having curled the last lock, was adjusting the green *saréti*. The court-yard was already crowded with spectators, and a numerous train of female slaves,

[1] Anglicè, "Superior to all."

who had entered by a side door, were arranging themselves in front. The quaint, loose chemises of blue and red, with broad white borders, which formed the attire of all, imparted a most grotesque appearance, and each carried on her woolly head a large wicker basket, ornamented with bead draperies arranged in every variety of fanciful vandyke. These antique figures and their burdens constituted the dower of the bride, whose wedding garments we had supplied, and who presently entered, riding upon a white mule, gaily tricked out in forked housings, chains, and brass bells. The Princess Worka Ferri[2], her sister, followed upon a second, similarly caparisoned; and both ladies were distinguished by large *áftabgirs* of crimson silk, as well as by a cowl of silver network which covered the hair, and terminated in a tiara of pendants and globules falling over the forehead. A crimson-striped robe formed the costume of each, and their naturally plain faces were rendered hideous by a coat of red ochre with blue-stained arches in the place of eyebrows, which it is the fashion of Shoa to pluck out.

Next in order came the royal band of music, with numerous mounted female attendants clad in pea-green vests. A dance and vocal chorus was continued during a quarter of an hour, to the dissonant thunder of the war drum; and as the umbrellas filed slowly across the court through the opposite

[2] i. e. Golden Fruit.

wicket, the happy bridegroom approached the throne, and did homage to the sovereign who had thus rewarded his services by alliance. The presence of the priest is so far from being held indispensable, that a wedded pair forms a rare phenomenon in Abyssinia. No marriage rites whatever solemnised this union; and the shrew, in full procession, proceeded straightway to spend the honeymoon at the abode of her third husband, who, following at a respectful distance, exhibited in his features small anticipation of conjugal felicity.

Descending through the great gate, a train of dirty cook-boys led the van, bearing on their heads pots, pans, and culinary utensils. One hundred female slaves followed, carrying baskets of bread, vessels of hydromel, bedding, wearing apparel, and other baggage required on the journey. Next came the band of flutes in full play, and immediately behind, the amiable bride herself, most aptly styled "superior to all." Two maids of honour, bearing decorated barillés of choice wine from the royal cellars, rode on either side of their mistress. Numerous mounted Amazons—musty-looking Æthiopic figures in blue and white smocks, and party-coloured bead helmets—kept the inquisitive crowd at a distance with their long white wands; whilst an escort of three hundred chosen spearmen, flanked by nobles, eunuchs, and pages on horseback, brought up the rear, amid the thumping of *nugdreet* from the hill top, and the shrill acclamations of the entire

female population of the town, which rung from every eminence in honour of the nuptials of Princess Belete Shatchau.

"My Galla subjects revolted," exclaimed the despot tauntingly, as soon as the wedding was over—"My Galla tributaries revolted: I have played them one trick, and I will shortly play them another."

The customary congratulations after a victory were offered in the words, "God has aided your arms." "Yes," replied the monarch; "the God of my fathers has assisted me—I have slain four thousand six hundred of mine enemies, and have captured thirty-seven thousand and forty-two head of cattle."

When complimenting the king on the clemency extended towards the prisoners of war, who had on this occasion been released for the first time during his reign, I did not lose the opportunity of commenting upon the destruction of innocent and helpless children, as being a most inhuman practice, and one quite unworthy of the Christian warrior. The despot smiled, as if half ashamed; and looking down, replied, "I am aware that it is bad, but in all countries we must conform to the customs that prevail. The Galla destroy the Amhára without discrimination, and we do but retaliate. You must all accompany me on my next campaign in January. I shall build a fortified house at Karábarek, and you must there tarry with me. Whenever you are present I will release the captives."

During the absence of the army at Garra Gorphoo, one of the Mohammadan inhabitants of Argóbba had been waylaid and wantonly murdered by the Adaïel, who are in constant feud with the frontier population of Efát. The relations and clansmen of the deceased surprised the village to which the assassins belonged, and, in revenge, slew sixteen persons. Wulásma Mohammad succeeded, after much difficulty, in apparently pacifying the lowland tribe, who had in their turn sworn upon the Korán to take bloody vengeance; but no sooner had he returned from the border, than thirteen Moslem females, proceeding from the town of Chánnoo to draw water in the wady, were barbarously butchered at the well.

This tragedy being followed by an application for troops to chastise the delinquents, now induced the remark, that "if the Adaïel could see one fourth of the Amhára host, they would cease to trouble the frontier."

"No," replied His Majesty, "it will not do. My grandfather tried his arms with the people below, but he was surprised, and lost four thousand men and six thousand oxen in the bed of a dry ravine. The water of the *kolla*[1] is putrid, and the air hot and unwholesome. Noxious vapours arise during the night, and the people die from fever. We fear their sultry climate and their dense

[1] i. e. Low valleys.

forests, and their mode of warfare. They leave open only one avenue; and when the Christians enter the thicket, breaking short their lances, they rush in and fight at close quarters. No one can stand against them. Our muskets avail nothing, by reason of the trees and bushes. Furthermore, the Adaïel are subtle in strong medicines. They poison the wells with drugs, and corrupt the water with magic spells and enchantments. It is their wont to mix together the flesh of a black dog, a cat, and a certain forest bird. This they strew craftily about the ground, and whoso eateth thereof, becomes instantly insane and dies."

According to the etiquette of the court, I now placed at the foot of the throne the presents which custom enforces after a victory. "My son," resumed the king, "I am your father. I am rich. You have already given me too much, and I desire not your property. I wish only for your love, and for that of your nation. I am fully aware of the objects of your residence in my kingdom. I have seen your character, and know that you will slay elephants, and buffalos, and wild beasts. You must not go away, but accompany me on many more expeditions. You have now seen much people. You must go with me to Gurágué, where you will behold other tribes, and a far more extensive country. I shall build a wall. My father subdued all the population of Shoa, and I fear no enemy to the south, in Gurágué, Enárea, or Zingero. None can

stand before me. The Adaïel and the people of Geshe[2] alone contend with me. In Geshe they have large shields, and fight hand to hand. The country of the Adel is difficult of access, and unfortunate for the Amhára. It is an old dependency of the empire of my ancestors; but the men are brave, and stand firm in battle. They will not run away."

[2] A province on the northern frontier of Shoa.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHRONICLE OF THE INVASION OF MOHAMMAD GRAAN.

In connection with the foregoing remarks respecting the inhabitants of the lowlands, it is now desirable to sketch, for the reader's information, some of those early hostilities between the Mohammadans and Christians, which find a record in the meagre annals of Abyssinia. They led, in the sixteenth century, to an event so often alluded to in these pages,--the invasion of Graan, "the Left-handed," whose irruptions proved the greatest calamity that ever befel the country.

The allegiance claimed from the Adaïel by the emperors of Æthiopia is known to have been evaded at a very remote period. Ages ago gold was returned for gold, apparel for apparel; and the intractable Moslems were studiously kept in good humour whensoever they thought proper to visit the Christian court. Their revenues arose chiefly from the supply of camels for the transport of merchandize to various parts of Africa, and from the importation of fossil salt, which then, as now, passed instead of silver currency, and for which they purchased slaves, together with the rich

staples of the interior. Thus the interests of Adel and of Abyssinia have always been so intimately linked, that the declaration of war was certain to prove disastrous alike to the victor and to the vanquished, since it must have interfered equally with the commerce by which both were enriched. Nevertheless, upon all suitable opportunities, the fanatic lowlanders, urged by religious hate, plundered the Christian churches, and massacred or tortured the priests, until they at length drew upon themselves a war of extermination.

The Abyssinian chroniclers state that Amda Zion, who died at Tegulet about the middle of the fourteenth century, first made a retributive inroad, in consequence of his rebellious vassals having, amongst many other derogatory expressions, taunted him as "an eunuch, fit only to take care of women." But the Emperor was never beaten. He overran and laid waste the plains from the mountains to the borders of the ocean, and swept off to the highlands a prodigious amount of cattle. Every species of enormity appears to have been practised in retaliation by the Amhára, who were commanded to "leave nothing alive that drew the breath of life." This behest was obeyed with all the rage and cruelty that revenge and a difference of religion could inspire; and before the termination of the campaign, the dauntless young King of Wypoo had been slain, together with Sáleh, the King of Mára, who boasted descent in a direct line from the Apostle.

Constant commercial intercourse had long been maintained between Caïro and Abyssinia, both across the desert and by way of the Red Sea. Great caravans, composed formerly of Pagans, but now of Mohammadans, passed in without molestation, and dispersed Indian manufactures through the heart of Africa. Friars, priests, nuns, and pious laymen, in vast numbers, also set out annually on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, whither, with drums beating before the holy cross, they proceeded by the route of Suakem, making long halts for the performance of divine service. But with the power of the Mamelukes, all communication across the desert, whether for commercial or religious purposes, was closed to the Christians. After the conquest of Egypt and Arabia by Selim I., caravans were invariably attacked, the old were butchered, and the young swept into slavery; for the Emperor of the Ottomans, fully imbued with the merciless bigotry of his creed, held it a sacred duty to convert by the sword the subjects of a monarch whose ancestor had been honoured with the correspondence of the great founder of the Saracen empire. Many Arabian merchants, flying about the same period from the violence and injustice of the Turkish tyrants, had sought an asylum in the opposite African states, whereupon the Ottomans took possession, from Aden, of the seaport of Zeyla, and not only laid the Indian trade under heavy contributions, by means of their galleys cruising in the narrow straits of Bab el Mandeb,

but threatened the conquest both of Adel and Abyssinia.

Betwixt these countries there subsisted peace from the death of Amda Zion to the middle of the fifteenth century. Towards the close of the reign of Zára Yácoob, who founded Debra Berhán, the flame of discord was again fanned by a certain queen of Zeyla, who is said to have aspired to the hand of the Emperor; but the Christian arms were still in the ascendant. Bæda Mariam, the next occupant of the throne, passed his life in a constant struggle to assert supremacy over the low country; and, on his death-bed, he caused himself to be so turned that his face might be towards the sandy deserts of the Adaïël, to whose subjugation his whole energies had for ten years been devoted.

Mafoodi's inroads, it has been seen, commenced during the reign of Alexander. They continued, with increasing horrors, throughout that of his successor Naod. Nebla Dengel being only eleven years of age when called to the throne, Helena, his mother, ruled during his minority. Albuquerque was at that period viceroy of India, and to him the queen-dowager sent to implore assistance for troubled Abyssinia. Arriving at Goâ, the ambassador announced himself to be the bearer of "a fragment of wood belonging to the true Cross on which Christ died, which relic had been sent, as a token of friendship to her brother Emmanuel, by the Empress over Æthiopia;" and this overture was in due time fol-

lowed by the arrival at Massowah of an embassy from the King of Portugal.

Father Alvarez has recorded the unfavourable reception experienced in Shoa at the hands of the young emperor, who could never be brought to recognize his mother's proceedings, which had led to this influx of foreigners. At the age of sixteen, having adopted the title of *Wánag Suggud*, signifying "feared among the lions," he had taken the field in person against Mafoodi, who, backed by the rebellious King of Adel, still continued his wasting inroads on the Christian frontier. At the opening of the campaign, this fanatic, who had resolved either to conquer or to die a martyr to his religion, threw the gauntlet of defiance to the Christian chivalry, and it was instantly accepted. The infidel was slain in single combat by the monk Gabriel, a soldier of tried valour, who had assumed the monastic cap during the preceding reign in consequence of having been deprived of the tip of his tongue for treasonable freedom of speech. Cutting off the head of this vanquished antagonist, he now threw it at the feet of his royal master, and exclaimed, "Behold, sire, the Goliath of the Infidels!" The green standard of the Prophet and of the faith was taken, twelve thousand of the Moslem were slain, and the youthful emperor, in defiance, struck his lance through the door of the King of Adel. The monk who had thus delivered Abyssinia from her worst scourge, was welcomed with the applause of

the whole nation. Maidens pressed forward to strew flowers in his path, and matrons celebrating his achievements with songs, placed garlands on his head, and held out their babes to gaze at the warrior as he passed.

It was shortly after the departure of the Portuguese embassy that Graan, "the Left-handed"—then King of Adel—made his first appearance on the Æthiopian stage, where he was long the principal actor. In league with the Turkish Bashaw on the coast of Arabia, this mighty warrior sent his Abyssinian prisoners to Mecca, and in return was furnished with a large body of Janizaries, at the head of whom he burst into Efắt and Fátigar, drove off the population, and laid waste the country with fire. In 1528 he took possession of Shoa, overran Amhára, burnt all the churches, and swept off immense booty. In his next campaign the invader wintered in Begémeder, and the following year hunted the emperor like a wild beast through Tigré to the borders of Sennaar, gave battle to the royal troops on the banks of the Nile, with his own hand slew the monk Gabriel, who had vanquished Mafoodi in single combat, cut the army to pieces, practised every species of atrocity, and set fire to half the churches in Abyssinia.

Famine and plague now raged, and carried off those whom the sword had spared. The princes of the blood were all destroyed; Axum was burnt, and the monarch, himself, after being compelled to

take refuge in the wilderness, was finally slain. With him died also the boasted splendour of the Abyssinian court, for he was the last monarch of Æthiopia who displayed the magnificence of a "king of kings."

Markos, the aged Archbishop, had, on his death-bed, appointed as his successor John Bermudez, a Portuguese who had been detained in the country, and at the request of Claudius, who succeeded to the empire, he now proceeded to Europe to obtain assistance. Don Christopher de Gama, with five hundred soldiers, obtained possession of Massowah, slew the governor, and sent his head to Gondar, where, as an early pledge of future victory, it was received with raptures by the queen. The general was shortly confronted by Graan in person. Artillery and muskets were for the first time opposed in Abyssinia; and the Portuguese leader being wounded, took refuge in a cave. Deaf to persuasion, he refused to seek safety in flight; and a Turkish lady of extraordinary beauty, whom he had made prisoner, and who had affected conversion to Christianity, shortly betrayed him to the enemy. He was carried before Graan, who, with his left hand cut off his head, and sent it to Constantinople, his body being quartered, and sent in portions to Arabia.

But the Portuguese were far from being disheartened by this grievous misfortune, and the armies were shortly in a position again to try their strength.

Before the engagement had well commenced, Peter Lyon, a marksman of low stature, but passing valiant withal, who had been valet to Don Christopher, having stolen unperceived along the dry channel of a ravine, shot Graan through the body. He fell from his horse some distance in advance of the troops, and the soldier, cutting off one of the infidel's ears, put it into his pocket. This success was followed by the total rout of the Mohammadans; and an Abyssinian officer of rank finding the body of the redoubted chief, took possession of his mutilated head, which he laid at the feet of the Emperor in proof of his claim to the merit of the achievement. Having witnessed in silence the impudence of his rival, the valet produced the trophy from his pocket, with the observation that His Majesty doubtless knew Graan sufficiently well to be quite certain, '"that he would suffer no one to cut off his ear that possessed not the power to take his head also."

Delivered from his enemy, Claudius now sought to repair the ravages which had been committed in his country. A total eclipse of the sun shortly afterwards threw both army and court into consternation —every ignorant monk who practised divination declaring the phenomenon to portend another invasion from the lowlanders. But in spite of this prophecy an interchange of prisoners took place. Del Wumbarea, the widow of Graan, had thrown herself into the wilds of Atbára, and her son Ali Jeraad,

who was made prisoner after his father fell, being now set at liberty, Prince Menas, only brother to the emperor, was released from his captivity in the sultry deserts of Adel, whither he had been carried during the reign of Nebla Dengel.

Noor, the Ameer of Hurrur, who was deeply enamoured of Del Wumbarea, had proved the means of her escape from the fatal field whereon her husband died. The heroine now pledged her hand in marriage to him who should lay the head of Claudius at her feet; and Noor instantly sent a message of defiance to the emperor, who was engaged in rebuilding the celebrated church of Debra-work, "the mountain of gold," which had been burnt by the infidels. Claudius, who had almost by a miracle rescued Abyssinia from the Mohammadans, marched instantly to accept the challenge. Many prophecies were current amongst the soldiery that the campaign was to prove unfortunate, and the hot-headed monarch to lose his life; but he laughed at these monkish predictions, declaring an honourable death to be infinitely preferable to the longest and most prosperous reign.

The rival armies were on the point of engaging, in the year 1559, when the high priest of Debra Libanos rushed before the emperor to declare a vision, in which the angel Gabriel had warned him not to suffer the king of the church of Æthiopia to expose himself in a needless fight. Thus discouraged, the cowardly Abyssinians instantly fled, leav-

ing Claudius supported only by a handful of Portuguese soldiers, who were soon slain around his person, and he immediately afterwards fell, covered with wounds. His head was cut off, and laid by Noor at the feet of Del Wumbarea, who, in observance of her pledge, became his wife, and with truly savage ferocity commanded the trophy to be suspended by the hair to the branches of a tree before her door, in order that her eyes might continually be gladdened by the sight. It hung in this position during three years, ere it was purchased by an Armenian merchant, who caused it to be interred in the holy sepulchre of St. Claudius at Antioch; and the name of the hero who had been victorious in every action save that in which he died, has since been enrolled in the voluminous catalogue of Abyssinian saints, where it now occupies a conspicuous place, as the destroyer of Mohammad, surnamed "the Left-handed."

To the present day the most preposterous legends are believed with reference to the personal prowess of this fierce invader, his gigantic stature, and the colossal size of his steed. He is said to have wielded a brand twenty feet in length; and although it is matter of notoriety that he fell in the manner above narrated, by the hand of a Portuguese soldier, he is represented to have received no fewer than four thousand musket bullets before yielding up the ghost. The supernatural achievements of Graan are handed down to posterity in an extant Amháric

volume; and his inroads gave birth in the mind of the people of Shoa to a superstitious dread of the Adaïel, such as was long entertained of the Turks in Northern Europe, and which it has been seen extends even to the warlike monarch.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PROCEEDINGS AT ANGOLLÁLA.

CERTAIN Abyssinian potentates of old are recorded by their biographers to have bestowed in religious charity all their worldly substance, saving the crown upon their heads. But such will never be said of Sáhela Selássie, whose endowments, although frequent, are invariably regulated by prudence. Avarice stigmatizes his every gift, and even adulterates the incense of his sacrifice. The countless droves of sturdy beeves which now ranged over the royal meadows were daily inspected with evident signs of satisfaction; but whilst the sleekest were distributed over the various pasture-lands, the leanest kine were despatched to the several churches and monasteries, as offerings after the successful campaign.

At this season of rejoicing and festivity, the host of loathsome objects that habitually infest the outer court, or crawl in quest of alms around the precincts of the palace, had increased to a surprising extent, in order to share the royal bounty. Swarms of itinerant paupers, who bivouacked under the old Galla wall, sang psalms and hymns in the streets

during the entire night; and long before dawn the clamour commenced around the tents of a throng of mendicants, resembling the inmates of a lazar-house, who, with insolent importunity, reiterated their adjurations for relief by Georgis, Miriam, Michael, and every other saint in the Abyssinian calendar. Many petty pilferings were of course committed by this ragged congregation; and a deputation of the inhabitants of Angollála soon presented a petition to the throne, praying for the dismissal of the vagrants, who had become an intolerable public nuisance.

On the festival of Tekla Haïmanót we received an invitation to witness the distribution of royal alms, which was to be followed by a beggars' feast. The wonted inmates of the palisaded enclosure were no longer there, but their place was occupied by a shoal of even more wretched beings, just imported with a caravan from Guráguê. Upwards of six hundred slaves, of every age, from childhood to maturity, and most of them in a state of perfect nudity, who had been snatched by the hand of avarice from the fair land of their birth, were here huddled together under the eye of the rover for inspection by the officers of the crown, preparatory to being driven to market; and the forlorn and destitute appearance both of old and young, stamped them objects but too well fitted for participation in the charity of a Christian monarch.

Immediately on our arrival within the court-yard of the palace, we were conducted by the king to the royal bedchamber—a gloomy apartment, lighted chiefly by the blaze of an iron chafing-dish, and shared not only by a Moolo Fálada cat, with a large family of kittens, but by three favourite war-steeds, whose mangers were in close proximity to the well-screened couch. Cleanliness did not characterise the warm curtains; and although cotton cloth had been pasted round the mud walls for the better exclusion of the wind, an air of peculiar discomfort was present. A rickety *alga* in one corner, a few hassocks covered with black leather, an Æthiopic version of the Psalms of David, and a carpet consisting of withered rushes, were the only furniture; and the dismal aspect of the room was further heightened by the massive doors and treble palisades which protect the slumbers of the suspicious despot. The mystery of our introduction into the precincts of the harem, was presently explained by the appearance of one of the young princes of the blood royal, who had arrived in the course of the morning, and, with eyes veiled, was now led in by a withered eunuch, in order that he might receive medical assistance.

Saifa Selássie, "the sword of the Trinity," is an extremely aristocratic and fine-looking youth, about twelve years of age, possessing the noble features of his sire, with the advantage of a very fair instead of a swarthy complexion. Beneath a red chintz

vest of Arabian manufacture, he wore a striped cotton robe, which fell in graceful folds from the girdle, and from the crown of the head a tassel of minutely-braided locks streamed to the middle of his back. "This is the light of mine eyes, and dearer to me than life itself," exclaimed the king, withdrawing the bandage, and caressing the boy with the utmost fondness—"Give him the medicine that removes ophthalmia, or he, too, will be blind like his father."

I assured His Majesty that no alarm need be entertained; and that although the cause was to be regretted, the day which had brought us the honour of an interview with the young prince could not but be deemed one of the highest good fortune. Much affected by this intimation, he laid his hand upon my arm, and replied, "We do not yet know each other as we ought, but we shall daily become better and better acquainted."

"Whence comes this *máskal?*" resumed the inquisitive monarch, raising a Catholic cross devoutly to his lips, as the royal scion was reconducted by the shrivelled attendant towards the apartments of the queen—"to what nation does it belong?" "It is the emblem of those who, in their attempts to propagate the Romish religion in Æthiopia, caused rivers of blood to flow," was the reply. "No matter," exclaimed His Majesty, in rebuke to the Mohammadan dragoman who would fain have assisted in the restoration of the paper envelope—

"How dost thou dare to profane the holy cross? These are Christians, and may touch it, but thou art an unbeliever."

The votaries of St. Giles had, meanwhile, been ushered through a private wicket, and in the adjacent enclosure offered a most revolting spectacle. The palsied, the leprous, the scrofulous, and those in the most inveterate stages of dropsy and elephantiasis, were mingled with mutilated wretches who had been bereft of hands, feet, eyes, and tongue, by the sanguinary tyrants of Northern Abyssinia, and who bore with them the severed portions, in order that their bodies might be perfect at the Day of Resurrection. The old, the halt, the deaf, the noseless, and the dumb, the living dead in every shape and form, were still streaming through the narrow door; limbless trunks were borne onwards upon the spectres of mules, asses, and horses, and the blind, in long Indian file, rolling their ghastly eyeballs, and touching each the shoulder of his sightless neighbour, groped their way towards the hum of voices, to add new horrors to the appalling picture.

An annual muster-roll being kept as a check, all who were ascertained to have been participators in the distribution of the preceding year were unceremoniously ejected by the myrmidons of the purveyor-general, who has ever the interests of the state revenues warmly at heart. The mendicants were next classed in squads according to their dis-

eases, and the dwarf father confessor, by no means the least frightful object in the assembly, proceeded, in capacity of king's almoner, to dispense the royal bounty. Sheep, clothes, and money, were distributed with a judicious hand, each donation made being carefully registered by the scribes in attendance; and half-baked bread, raw beef, and sour beer, in quantities sufficient to satisfy every monk and beggar in the realm, having been heaped outside the palace gate, all ate their fill, and dispersed.

Next to the merciful disposition of Sáhela Selássie, his munificence to the indigent may be ranked among his most prominent virtues. Whilst the needy never retire empty-handed from his door, no criminal ever suffers under the barbarous mutilation, so many distressing monuments of which had this day shared his liberality. Blood flowing from the veins of a subject finds no pleasure in the eyes of the ruler of Shoa. Under his sway the use of the searing iron has become obsolete, and the sickening sentence is unknown which in the northern states condemns the culprit to the wrenching off of hands and feet, whereof the teguments have previously been severed with a razor at the wrist and ankle. But widely opposed are the views of humanity entertained in different climes; and the scene that awaited our return from the banquet, although in strict accordance with retributive justice, was in appalling contrast with the more merciful fiat of civilized jurisprudence.

A warrior had been convicted upon undeniable evidence of the murder of his comrade in arms, with whom he had lived for years on terms of the closest intimacy. During the recent campaign, he had gone with this companion into the wood, and taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by hostilities with the Galla, had felled the unsuspecting man to the earth with a blow of his sword. Fame, such as is only to be acquired by the slaughter of the foe, prompted the dastardly outrage; and the treacherous assassin who had embrued his hands in the blood of his dearest friend, now placed the green trophy of valour triumphantly on his guilty head. "Where is thy brother?" was the question that awaited his return to the camp; but, like Cain of old, he denied all knowledge of what had befallen the absentee; and it was not until the body had been discovered, that suspicion fell heavily upon himself.

Mourning relatives threw themselves in sackcloth at the imperial footstool, and cried aloud for the blood of the prisoner. Arraigned before the monarch, the investigation had been patiently conducted during the beggars' feast, and the "Fétha Negést" having been duly consulted, the sentence proceeded from the royal lips—"Take him hence, and deal with him as you will."

The last sun that was to shine upon the malefactor was sinking fast towards the western horizon, when, with hands bound behind his back, he was

hurried from the presence for instant execution. Its rising rays had seen him seated at the door of the hut, whilst his young wife adorned his locks with the newly-plucked branch of asparagus, that was the record of his infamy, but the meridian beam had witnessed his arrest. The relatives of the murdered, and a band of the king's headsmen, each armed with shield and broad-headed spear, now formed a close phalanx round him as he proceeded with the stoicism of the savage to meet his well-merited doom; and an infuriated mob followed, to heap taunts and ignominy upon his numbered moments.

Impatient of delay, the friends of the deceased were about to immolate their victim on the meadow close to the encampment of the Embassy; but adjured by the life of the monarch, they urged the culprit over the rocky mound adjoining the Galla wall, which was already crowded with a vast concourse of spectators, burning for the consummation of the last sentence of the law. Scarcely had the unresisting criminal passed the summit, than an eager hand stripped the garment from his shoulder, and twenty bright spears being poised at the moment, he turned his head to the one side, to receive a deep stab on the other. Whilst still reeling, a dozen blades were sheathed in his heart, and a hundred more transfixed the prostrate body. Swords flashed from the crooked scabbard —the quivering corse was mutilated in an instant, and on

the next the exulting executioners took their way from the gore-stained ground, bearing the trophy aloft, as they howled with truly savage satisfaction the Christian chorus of death!

Mother, sisters, and wives, now flocked around the lifeless clay, rending the air with their piercing shrieks.—"Alas! the brave have fallen, the spirit of the bold has fled." "*Waiye, waiye*—woe unto us, we have lost the son of our declining years"—"our brother and our husband is gone for ever!" Bared breasts were beaten and scarified, and temples were torn with the nails until the evening closed, and it was dark when the mourners ceased their shrill lamentation. But the turbaned priest was not there; no absolution had been given, nor had the last sacrament been partaken; and the unhallowed remains of the murderer would have found a tomb in the maw of the hyena and the vulture, had not a charitable hand enclosed them under a cairn of stones by the highway side, where many a grass-grown mound marks the fate of the cowardly assassin, who had destroyed his brother in the wood, and whose memory is coupled with dishonour.

CHAPTER XXX.

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY TO THE CAPITAL.

"Reculer pour mieux sauter," is a maxim strictly in accordance with His Majesty's notions of strategy. Twenty days had elapsed since the return of the expedition, when the arrival before the palace of six thousand head of cattle proclaimed the success of a second sweeping foray directed against the Ekka and Fintinni Galla. A Mohammadan merchant residing at Roqué, the market town and great slave-mart of Yerrur, was suspected of having with his own hand slain the son of Ayto Besuehnech, grand-nephew to the king—this youth having pressed on far in advance of his comrades in pursuit of the retreating pagans. To avenge his untimely death, a detachment, consisting of five thousand horse, was despatched under the command of Aytos Berkie, Chilo, and Dogmo, the government of which latter chief had previously been extended in acknowledgment of his recent services. They made a forced march through Bulga, and although foiled in their principal object by the precipitate flight of the rover whose life they sought, the whole of his family and

followers were massacred, his effects plundered, and his house burnt to the ground.

The survivors of the Ekka and Finfinni tribes, believing the fatal storm to be expended, had already returned with the residue of their flocks and herds, and were actively engaged in restoring their dilapidated habitations, when the Amhára hordes again burst over their fair valley, slew six hundred souls, and captured all the remaining cattle, thus completing the chastisement of these devoted clans, who, notwithstanding the generous restoration of their enslaved families, had failed to make submission—and redeeming the royal pledge "to play the rebels another trick."

The king had not honoured Ankóber with his presence since the arrival in Shoa of the British Embassy, but His Majesty now announced his intention of entering the capital in triumph. Thinly attended, and unscreened by the state umbrellas, he issued at sunrise on horseback through the *sirkosh ber*, the only addition to his usual costume being a plume of nine feathers stripped from the *Rása*, or egret, which were worn in the hair in token of his recent prowess at Boora Roofa. Putting his horse into a gallop, he never drew bridle until stopped by the Beréza, many parties under governors of the adjacent districts joining the royal *cortége* from various quarters, and swelling the retinue to two thousand equestrians, who continued at a furious pace to clatter over the stony ground.

Mosábeit, a village standing on a peninsula formed by the junction of the Toro Mesk water with the Beréza, imparts its name to this, the most direct road from Angollála to Ankóber. The river forded, the king mounted his mule, and diverging to the right, passed through a valley studded with hamlets, the inhabitants of which, male and female, came forth with many prostrations to the earth, whilst the women raised their voices together in the usual ringing *heléltee*.

On all occasions of rejoicing and ceremony, whether on the successful return of the monarch or of the warrior, or on the sight of a passing procession, the ladies of Abyssinia, with their characteristic love of noise, thus burst forth into a thrilling clamour of welcome, moving the tongue with more than ordinary volubility against the palate, and producing a continuous succession of tremulous notes. One watchful dame on the outskirts perceives the approach of the cavalcade, and forthwith gives out her wild screech of warning. In a moment the mountain side is covered with every female within hearing; the *Hil! lil! lil!* progresses fast and furious as they bend nearly double to assist in upraising the yelling chorus; tears stream from their eyes in the violence of the exertion, and far and near the hills resound with the gathered volume of their shrill throats.

The king halted for a moment at a pile of s ones by the way-side, covered with rags, feathers, and

flowers, to which every devout Christian adds his tribute whilst saluting it with his lips. It points to the white-roofed church of St. Michael the Archangel, peeping through a dark clump of junipers at some distance from the road, and many were the fervent kisses of adoration bestowed by the triumphant warriors. A little beyond, a large black cross on the summit of a tumulus directs attention to the residence of Ayto Berri, quarter-master-general of the Amhára forces. Here His Majesty again diverged, in order to lead the cavalcade through the most thickly populated tract; and after resting for half an hour in the Ungua-mesk, one of the many royal meadows, now black with the Galla herds, he turned suddenly off to the Motátit road, according to his invariable custom, when proceeding to the capital after a successful foray.

The Arsiamba, styled at its point of intersection with the route usually pursued, *Ya Wurjoch Madéria*, the "resting-place of merchants," is a singular cataract rolling over columnar basalt, of which the ribbed cliffs on either side are thronged by bees. But by far the most interesting object is a certain white pillar, overgrown with nettles, standing at the foot of the hills which bound the Ungua-mesk. It is designated "Graan's stone," and is famous from an existing tradition that the Moslem invader tied his war-horse to it on the occasion of his leading the Adaïel to the destruction of Debra Berhán.

Abundantly cultivated, and rich in grazing land,

the tract we had passed over is throughout so destitute of trees and even of bushes, that the inhabitants employ no other fuel than dried manure. Arrived at the summit of the Cháka mountain, where straggling *cossos* break the monotony of the landscape, many hundred females, assembled from the numerous villages in the vicinity, lining the surrounding heights, again kept up one continued cry. It was drowned at intervals by discharges of musketry, which echoed among the broken glens as the despot descended; and, preceded by a war-dance, wherein all the warriors joined, he finally took up his quarters for the night in a house separated by a deep valley from the capital.

Early the ensuing morning we rode out to the Cháffa meadow at the foot of the palace, to meet and welcome His Majesty, who, after arraying himself within a marquee erected for his accommodation, shortly appeared through a gorge in a low range of hills, which was crowned on either side by matchlockmen of the imperial body-guard. These kept up an incessant fire as the royal *cortége* advanced over the grassy plain, preceded by a band of mounted warriors, who, as on the occasion of the triumphant entry to Angollála, careered in intersecting circles. The king bestrode a richly caparisoned mule, and wore a green scarf mantle of Delhi embroidery. A golden collar encircled his neck, and a massive silver akódama extended on either side a considerable distance beyond the tem-

ples. The ends of the beam were hung with a profusion of silver chains a yard in length, whilst a row of spangled pendants across the brow half obscured the eyes, and imparted a peculiarly savage aspect, which was enhanced by a large branch of wild asparagus floating above the curly locks, and by a white and crimson robe drawn across the lower portion of the face.

As the cavalcade advanced, the braves continued to caracole until reaching the extremity of the meadow, where the assembled priests and monks of Ankóber, as well as of the neighbouring churches and monasteries, were drawn up to receive their sovereign. The holy arks were each screened under the canopy of a large embroidered umbrella; and that of St. Michael, the senior, which had accompanied the army into the field, was carried beneath a *debáb* of solid embossed silver, decorated with chain pendants and fretwork. Psalms having been chanted by the turbaned body, who danced vehemently to their own chorus, the *Alaka* of the cathedral advancing, laid his hands on the head of the victorious monarch, and gave his blessing, when the procession moved slowly forward towards the foot of the hill, singing the death knell of the pagan,—

> "Moolohóy Mooló? Hai hai!
> Wokáo? Selála dábito!"

The warriors, preceded by the royal band of kettle-drums and wind instruments, took the lead

up the long steep and narrow path which winds along the verge of a precipitous ascent to the palace, perched on the very pinnacle of the cone. A proclamation, through the herald, having commanded the presence of all the inhabitants of the capital and of the villages adjacent, every roof, bank, and cliff, was crowded with women and girls. As the king passed on, they kept up an unceasing clamour, and it increased to a deafening din as he approached the gate of the outer enclosure, where a dense mass of curled heads extended across the entire open area in front of the palisades.

The British escort, drawn up before the lower defences, presented arms as the monarch passed, and within the stockade stood the high priests of the five churches, robed and mitred. The clamour, the music, and the echo of musketry, continued during the tedious ascent of the steep and difficult path, which, broken into steps, winds betwixt lofty palisades, through nine gateways and lodges, to the inner enclosure. Here His Majesty took his seat in a raised alcove, the throne, and the usual trappings of royalty, being on this occasion new throughout, and more than wonted cleanliness pervading every quarter of the palace.

Once more the large drum in the middle of the court gave forth its deep notes. Three hundred concubines, seated in a circle around, again screamed and clapped their stained hands in deafening concert. A dancing girl, flanked by two wild braves,

whirled in front of the throne, and in a series of eulogistic rhymes, composed by herself, chanted a rehearsal of the recent heroic deeds of the puissant monarch, "who, although invariably triumphant over his heathen foes, had never decorated his royal brow with a branch greener than that by which it was now surmounted." Each time she turned towards the crowd, a shrill clamour of united voices rang forth the chorus to her verse. The skin-clad warriors leapt and howled;—akodámas, coronets, and silver swords, glistened in the morning sun; and as the chiefs, governors, and nobles, formed in a semicircle on either side of the latticed balcony, stamped and clapped their hands in savage triumph—the populace, crowding the carpeted yard, and lining every wall, capered, yelled, and shouted with the wildest enthusiasm. A general war-dance followed the cessation of the shrill notes of the songstress, and the pageant concluded with a royal salute, fired by the artillery detachment over the British flag, which, in honour of His Majesty's arrival, floated far below in the centre of the capital of Shoa.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PALACE AT ANKÓBER.

THE entire slope of the palace eminence is studded with thatched magazines and out-houses; and these, shame to the Christian monarch, form the scene of the daily labours of three thousand slaves. In one quarter are to be seen groups of busy females, engaged in the manufacture of beer and hydromel. Flat cakes of teff and wheat are preparing by the hundred under the next roof, and from the dark recesses of the building arises the plaintive ditty of those who grind the corn by the sweat of their brow. Here cauldrons of red pepper soup yield up their potent steam; and in the adjacent compartment, long twisted strips of old cotton rag are being dipped in bees' wax. Throughout the female establishment the bloated and cross-grained eunuch presides; and his unsparing rod admonishes his giggling charges that they are not there to gaze at the passing stranger.

In the sunny verandah of the wardrobe, tailors and curriers are achieving all manner of curious amulets and devices—the offspring of a savage brain. Blacksmiths are banging away at the anvil under the eaves of the banqueting hall. Turbaned priests,

seated in the porch, armed with a party-coloured cow's tail, indolently drive away the flies from volumes which are elevated on a rack before their ancient eyes, and detail the miracles of the saints. Under one shed, notaries are diligently committing to parchment elaborate inventories of tribute received. Sacred books are being bound in a second. In a crowded corner painters are perpetrating on the illuminated page atrocious daubs of our first father carrying spear and buckler in the Garden of Eden; and in the long shadow thrown by the slaughter-house, whence a stream of blood is ever flowing across the road, carpenters are destroying bad wood in a clumsy attempt to fashion a gun stock with a farrier's rasp, for the reception of an old honey-combed barrel which promises to burst upon the very first discharge.

Governors and nobles, with shields and silver swords, are seated above. Clamorous paupers, itinerant monks, and applicants for justice, fill the lower courts. The open *Aráda* before the great gate is choked with idlers, gossips, and immoveable beggars, who, from the rising up to the going down of the sun, maintain one incessant howl of importunity. Oxen and asses, goats and sheep, have established their head-quarters in every filthy avenue. Newly-picked bones and bullocks' skulls strew the rugged descent; and on the last terrace, surrounded by stagnant mire, behold Ayto Wolda Hána himself, seated in magisterial dignity, arranging the affairs of

the nation. Hundreds tremble at his uncompromising nod; and appellant and respondent, accuser and accused, alike bared to the girdle, bend in cringing submission, as in a cracked and querulous voice the despotic legislator delivers his arbitrary fiat.

During the absence of the Negoos on military expeditions, the most inquisitorial espionage is exercised over the actions of every foreigner, and the strictest police established, to insure the safety of the almost deserted capital. Every avenue is vigilantly guarded, and no stranger allowed to enter the town without permission of the viceroy. Children only are suffered to leave the houses after dark; and watchmen, patrolling in all directions, apprehend every adult who may be found abroad during the night.

But Ankóber was now thronged to overflowing. Brawls disturbed the streets, and, during the early hours of each evening, drunken parties were to be seen streaming home from the royal banquet, shouting the war chorus, and not unfrequently preceded by one of the court buffoons, engaged in the performance of the most absurd follies, antics, and grimaces. Day and night the invocations of a host of mendicants arose from every lane and alley, and the importunity to which we were exposed on the part of the wealthy had attained the point beyond which it was scarcely possible to advance. Each ruffian who had destroyed an infant considered that

he possessed an undeniable right to be "decorated from head to foot, and completely ornamented." Villains, streaming with rancid butter, entered the Residency, and desired that the "Gyptzis's bead shop might be opened, as they had brought salt to purchase a necklace;" whilst the king's three fiddlers, who had each slain a foe during the foray, appearing with the vaunting green *suréti*, attuned their voices and their squeaking instruments to the detail of their prowess, and demanded the merited reward. "The gun is the medicine for the cowardly Pagan who ascends a tree," was the maxim of many who aspired to the possession of one of these weapons; and for hours together men stood before the door with cocks and hens and loaves of bread, to establish their claim to the possession of "pleasing things."

With the design of aiding his fast-swelling collection of natural history, Dr. Roth had offered rewards to all who chose to contribute, and the king's pages were kept well supplied with ammunition for the destruction of birds; but the unconquerable love of sticking a feather in the hair almost invariably spoiled the specimen. A bat, firmly wedged between the prongs of a split cane, was one day brought by a boy, who extended the prize at arm's length: "I've caught him at last," he exclaimed with exultation—"It is the Devil, who had got into the monastery of Aferbeine; I've caught the rascal; *min abát?*" "what is his father?"

After this strong invective, which is indiscrimi-

nately applied also as occasion demands, to man, beast, and every inanimate thing, the youth was not a little surprised to perceive the naturalist quietly extricate the much-dreaded animal with his fingers. A party of females, who carried pitchers of water at their backs, had halted in the road, and looking over the hedge, were silent spectators of the proceeding. "*Erág, erág,*" they exclaimed with one accord, placing their hands before their mouths as they ran horror-stricken from the spot—"*O wai Gypt,*" "Alas, Egyptians! far be such things from us!"

On the festival of Michael the Archangel, whose church immediately adjoins the palace, the monarch received the holy sacrament in the middle of the night, and returned thanks for his victory, a chair having previously been obtained from the Residency to obviate the fatigue stated to have resulted from former orisons. The holy ark, which had brought success to his arms, was again placed under the silver canopy, and thrice carried in solemn procession around the sacred edifice, under a salute of musketry and ordnance. Large offerings were as usual made to it, alms distributed among the poor, a new cloth given to each of the king's slaves, and a feast prepared for every inhabitant of Ankóber. Rejoicings, which had continued throughout the city since the triumphal entry, were this day renewed with increased energy, even girls and young children whooping war-songs in celebration of the safe return of the warriors from battle.

But the voice of lamentation succeeded to the strains of joy. An eclipse had suddenly inumbrated the moon, and as the black shadow was perceived stealing rapidly onwards, and casting a mysterious gloom over the face of nature, late so bright, the exulting Christians were seized with the direst consternation. The sound of the drum was hushed, and the wild chorus was heard no more. Believing the orb to be dead, and that her demise prognosticated war, pestilence, and famine, the entire town and suburbs became a scene of panic, tumult, and uproar, whilst women and men, priests and laity, collecting together in the streets and in the churches, cried aloud upon the "Saviour of the world to take pity on them—to screen them from the wrath of God—and to cover them with a veil of mercy, for the sake of Mary, the mother of our Lord."

The pagan Galla, of whom there are many in Ankóber, lifting up their voices, joined in the general petition, and, from not comprehending the Amhárić tongue, placed upon it the most absurd construction. During the whole period of the moon's obscuration, the wailing continued without intermission; and when the planet, emerging, sailed again through the firmament in all her wonted brilliancy, a universal shout of joy burst from the lips of the savages, in the firm belief that the prayers and sobs of the multitude had prevailed, and awakened her from the sleep of death.

His Majesty had been previously apprised of the precise hour and minute at which the obscuration was to commence and terminate, and his incredulity in the first instance was followed by equally unfeigned surprise at the powers of divination displayed. "Eclipses are bad omens," said the king, when their causes had been explained. "Was Subagádis not slain on the appearance of one, and did another not bring defeat to Ras Ali?" The chief smith was, nevertheless, instructed to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the use of logarithmic tables, and of "the instruments that read the heavens;" and the royal attention was temporarily diverted from the study of medicine to the contemplation of the celestial bodies.

In Shoa, the silver sword is the emblem of rank and authority, and it is girded on the loins of none but those who enjoy an exalted place in the sovereign's favour. The forfeiture of government and the loss of the cumbrous badge go hand in hand, and many are the weary hours of attendance indispensable towards the restoration of either. On no foreigner who had yet visited the Christian land had this mark of distinction been conferred, but the despot now suddenly resolved that the fluted tulip scabbard should adorn his English guests. "You bring the stars upon earth, and foretel coming events," said His Majesty, as he presented these tokens of favour and confidence—"you are my

children; you possess strong medicine. You must wear these swords in assurance of my permanent love, that your name may be great in the eyes of all my people."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FOREST OF MAMRAT.

Excursions abroad continued as usual to occupy the royal leisure; and even when rats and horned owls formed the ignominious quarry, the king's Gyptzis were invariably summoned. But the dark forests which clothe the foot of Mamrat proved the favourite scene of these rambles, and thither the steps of the monarch were usually directed. Large colonies of the *guréza*, which inhabit the noblest trees, offered an irresistible attraction; and although, from their retired habits no less than from their appearance, these inoffensive apes are regarded in the light of monks, their holy character did not exempt them from frequent and severe punishment. A shower of iron and stone balls tumbled one after the other from his perch on the topmost branches of some venerable moss-grown *woira*, where, notwithstanding many cunning artifices, the white cowl and the long snowy cloak upon the otherwise sable body, betrayed the place of concealment; and numbers being soon prostrate upon the ground, the survivors, amazed at the murderous intrusion, were to be seen swinging from bough to bough like a slack-rope

dancer, and leaping from tree to tree as they sought more secure quarters in the, to man, inaccessible sides of the hail-capped mountain.

Occupying manifold caves and subterranean crannies in this the most elevated pinnacle within the range of vision, the idolized riches of Sáhela Selássie are covered with massive iron plates, barred, and secured by large heaps of stone. A strong guard of matchlockmen occupies the only practicable ascent to the treasury; and the keys of its well-crammed coffers, which are never opened unless for the purpose of being still further stuffed, are strictly confided to Ayto Hábti, the master Cyclops of the realm. At the extremity of a forest vista, the huge wooded cone presents a grand and imposing object, avenues of tall trees screening its dark defiles, whilst the fleecy vapour that steals across the hoary summit, discloses glimpses of the many smiling hamlets which crest the Abyssinian Alps.

A Mohammadan legend asserts, that in time of yore, "the Mother of Grace" towered even to the skies, and so remained until the first invasion of Graán. Ameer Noor, his brother, the ruler of Hurrur in its golden days, having formed his camp upon a rising ground above Alio Amba, despatched his chieftains in all directions to slay, burn, and plunder. Upon their return, laden with rich booty, obtained without having encountered a single Amhára, the disappointed Ameer exclaimed, in his re-

ligious zeal, "'Tis the mountain Mamrat that hides the dastardly infidels. May Allah, the only one God, who rules over the universe, grant that it be overthrown, and my foes revealed!" Scarcely had the pious prayer escaped his lips, than the pile reeled to and fro like a drunken man, and sank to its present level.

"The country of the Adaïel," adds the same veracious authority, "through which the Ameer led the followers of the true Prophet, was in those days a trackless desert, totally destitute of springs; but on his stamping his foot upon the thirsty soil at the termination of each day's march, there gushed forth a fountain of living water, which has continued to flow until the present time." During the struggle that followed the arrival of the Moslem invaders, the Christians are said to have been in danger of perishing from lack of provisions, until the inhabitants of Argóbba, who are styled Shooggur, from the name of their ancestor, supplied the army, by rolling over the mountain side skins filled with grain. In a battle fought shortly after the arrival of this seasonable supply, Ali Muggan, the governor of Zeyla. was slain on the terrace betwixt Mamrat and Alio Amba, and his body left to the wild beasts; whereupon Noor, his brother, cursing the race who, professing the faith of Islam, had been the agents of so dire a calamity, doomed their necks to be chafed for ever by the galling yoke of vassalage to unbelievers.

Far hid in the rugged bosom of the "Mother of Grace," is a spacious cell, often visited by the king. During one half of the fourteenth century, it formed the abode of an anchorite, renowned far and wide for the austerity of his life, who invariably slept upon a bed of sharp thorns, and whose food was restricted to roots and wild honey. Hatzé Amda Zion was then engaged in his disastrous war with Adel; and the ascetic, seizing his white staff, abandoned his rigorous solitude for the first time, and fired by religious zeal, rushed into the presence of the Emperor, who was encamped on the banks of the Háwash. Displaying the holy cross to the dispirited soldiery, he exhorted them to be of good heart, and not to let the standard of Christ droop before the profane ensign of the infidels; for that it was written in the book of the Revelation of St. John, that Islamism was that year to be crushed and trodden under foot throughout the world. At his bidding, three merchants of Hurrur, who, under the guise of suttlers, performed the office of spies, were hung without trial, and their heads being transmitted to the King of Adel, proved the forerunners of a bloody defeat, which he shortly afterwards sustained.

To the latest occupant of the cave of Mamrat is attached the legend embodied in the two ensuing chapters. It is fully illustrative of the grovelling superstition that enthrals the Amhára, of whom none ever allude to the dread sorcerer Thavánan, with-

out an invocation to the Deity. He was an exiled noble of Northern Abyssinia, high in the favour of Asfa Woosen, fifth monarch of Shoa, who took forcible possession of his sister, and after degrading the courtier for opposing this despotic measure, sentenced him to the loss of an eye, which was put out with a hot iron. Resolved to have his revenge, the outcast became a worshipper of the eighty-eight invisible spirits, termed *Sároch*, believed to be the emissaries for evil of Wárobal Máma, the King of the Genies, whose court is held at the bottom of Lake Alobár, in Mans, whence his drum is heard pealing over the water whenever war, famine, or pestilence are about to visit the land.

Having purchased supernatural powers at the price of his hope of salvation, Thavánan tormented the king day and night—spirited away his seraglio, and having thus recovered his sister, deprived her oppressor of sight by means of magic spells. Taking the name of Abba Zowald, he then became a stern ascetic; and his bones now lie interred in the cell beneath a pile of rough stones, which, during a long period of mortification, served him for a couch, whilst roots and wild fruits formed his only fare. Angels are said to have ministered unto him; his voice was the voice of an oracle; and none recognizing the sorcerer in a holy Christian anchorite, who had despised the world and its vanities during a period of fifty years, he lived universally regarded in Abyssinia as a second Peter.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE NECROMANCER, A LEGEND OF SHOA.

In the lone recesses of a rocky cave reclined the youth Thavánan, lost in gloomy meditation. The lines of care and study were indelibly stamped upon his lofty forehead; and although the bent brow and the quivering lip betokened a stern mental conflict, still courage and high daring shone bright through the shroud of revenge which had settled over his dark features. The white robe of Abyssinia lay uneasy on his shoulder; and the blue silk cord which encircled his neck, the badge of Christianity, nearly burst in twain as the swollen sinews started from the throat, in this his hour of agony.

A fearful storm raged without. Thunder rolled in continued peals, crumbling in pieces the sparry roof over-head, and the hot lightning illumined every nook and corner of the retreat, whilst the waters of the broad lake, now raised in wrath, came dashing and foaming to its very mouth with all the violence of a winter sea. But the war of the elements was unheeded by the sufferer, and ever and anon, starting from his recumbent position, he

paced in desperation the uneven floor of the slippery cavern.

"Years have rolled away since that withering moment," he exclaimed; "but the wound is yet green in the mind, and the feeling is still fresh as when writhing under the searing iron of the tyrant. The star Medáboot proclaims the hour of the requisite sacrifice. I acknowledge thy power, great Genius of the Water. Wárobal Mama, I call for thy aid."

Stripping the robe from his person, and tearing the bandage from his sightless eye, he roused a sleeping goat from the corner of the cave. A garland of yellow flowers was wreathed in fantastic folds among the long sharp horns, and a white collar twined its mystic threads around the throat. The animal had been a favourite of former days whilst browsing on the green meadows of Shoa, and knowing the voice of its master, it quietly followed his footsteps into the centre of the grotto.

The bright eyes were turned upwards in confiding innocence as it licked the hand which had so often fed and caressed it; but all pity and compassion were effaced in one fiery feeling of revenge: The words of the dread spell to the spirit of the deep were poured forth on the midnight blast; and the sharp knife gleaming for a moment in the air, was plunged into the heart of the unresisting victim.

Shrieks filled the cavern, and unearthly echoes

were flung back from every side of the broken vault, whilst the life-stream gurgled on to mingle with the waters of the lake; and as the last faint groan was rendered from the expiring animal, the badge and symbol of Christianity[1] was dipped in the crimson tide which had flowed to the honour of the genius and his satellites.

A sulphur-coloured fowl was next subjected to the necessary preparations for the sacrifice. One eye was deliberately scooped out amidst blasphemy and execration, and the bright blue cord which had hitherto graced the neck of the Christian, now gory with unhallowed blood, was bound in a mysterious knot on this the second victim to the powers of darkness. The holy cross was suspended to the desecrated thread; and having raised the flickering embers with sweet woods and subtle essences, Thavánan crushed the head of the fowl under his heel until the brains flowed, and then dashed the body into the fire.

The flame shot aloft in one fierce spire of light, blazing like the arrow of the infernal host, and, again, satiate with the pungent offering, sank amid a stifling cloud of fetid smoke. Casting himself upon the rocky floor in an attitude of prostration, the youth listened in awe to the moans of the wind which had succeeded to the hurricane. But his

[1] The cord of blue silk styled "mateb," which in Abyssinia is worn around the neck of the Christian to denote his faith, has usually a small silver cross appended.

courage was firm as the foundations of Mamrat; and it was well for him that his heart quailed not during that hour of perilous endurance.

The effects of his diabolical incantation were soon manifest. Foul spirits mowed and chattered in his ear, and the cold rushing of pinions flapping lazily through the air wetted him with slimy spray. But revenge and desperation had steeled his nerves; and after a period of intense misery, which appeared without limit to the sufferer, the melancholy sound of a drum came faintly booming over the face of the waters—the welcome token that the hour of trial was past, and that the sacrifice had been accepted. Waxing louder and louder, the pealing of the music shook the rocks with its continuous reverberations. Unearthly voices, ceasing to torment, faded altogether away; and the renegade, casting one look on the ashes of things holy and once prized, stepped forth from the mouth of the cavern.

Wild and fearful was the scene which met his gaze. The moon was for the moment unobscured, but huge masses of pale cloud, like armed hosts, sped fiercely across the skies, whilst thunder and lightning seemed to warn the astounded beholder that spirits of another world were engaged in their unholy revels.

Unruffled by the breeze, the great lake spread like a sheet of molten silver at his feet; whilst every cliff and crag, revealed boldly to view, was fearfully lit up by the reflected glare of an unearthly

lurid flame, which at short intervals spouted in jets from the centre of the expanse, amid streams of wild melancholy music and the clash of the magic drum.

Roused to daring deeds in this moment of frantic excitement, with one short prayer to the spirit he had invoked, Thavánan plunged headlong into the cold deep waters, which gurgled and bubbled over his descending form; but baffled in his design to reach the glittering white sand—now the only haven of his hope—he rose once more to the surface.

All was dark, dismal, and lonely. A thick fog covered the water, the earth, and the sky, whilst the voice of his better angel alone came moaning through the mist, bewailing the lost soul of a son of Adam. Again and again he struggled to reach the glowing bed of the lake, but mortal strength and energy were unavailing to pierce the fathomless abyss. The clear searching element rushed unresisted into his mouth and ears—the faintness of death spread over his exhausted limbs—and his senseless form, tossed to and fro, became the sport of the heaving billow.

But the sound of the spell had swept along the blast, and the savour of the sacrifice had penetrated into the halls of magic. A long sinewy arm raised the body high over the water. The drum again pealed through the boundless space; the bright fire threw one last triumphant stream above the surface,

and a heavy plunge beneath the waves was succeeded by the utter silence of solitude.

* * * * *

The soft tinkling sound of harps first stole upon the slumbers of the neophyte. Bright, happy visions flitted over his awakening senses, and the sweet melody of voices ushered him again into existence. Starting from his trance, the bewildered Thavánan found ample scope for the indulgence of his wonder and astonishment. Far as the eye could scan, innumerable arcades stretched in endless vistas on every side, with alternating domes of the purest pearl. Pillars of variously coloured amber and crystal rose to sustain the glowing fabric, and cloths, such as emperors alone can boast, strewed the floors in unbounded profusion.

In the centre of each gallery stood an altar of virgin silver, from which a never-failing arrow of flame diffused a mellow light over the glittering pillars of the hall. Around their more searching sister, jets of sweet-scented water played high in the air; and dancing on the apex of each fountain, a sparkling emerald, the ransom of a monarch, gently regulated the rush of the stream, in token that the elements were here held under control.

Superb paintings, illuminated in transparency, shed a dreamy languor over the scene, and music lent her exhaustless charms to captivate the sense. Sweet strains of triumph, ringing in full chorus among the lofty domes, died gently away into the

softness of repose; and at times the low murmur of the waves fell pleasingly upon the ear, as the lake poured forth her springs in homage to the master spirit, and imprinted the kiss of obedience on the magic abode of Wárobal Máma.

Colossal statues of Famine, War, and Pestilence, frowned from their lofty pedestals in all the sternness of brass above the glories of this rich and varied scene. Each giant arm grasped a knotted mace, whose awful blow on the iron drum of misfortune was well known to the dismayed inhabitants of the upper regions of earth as the sure harbinger of woe.

Arts and sciences had each their separate niche in the spacious apartment; and favoured votaries were deeply engaged in scanning subtle essences, or preparing potent spells. The hum of confused voices was borne on the fragrant atmosphere, whilst at intervals strange emblems and tokens were delivered by the elders to the attending pupils, who each sprang aloft upon gaudy pinions to execute the behest of his superior. But the smiling face of fair woman was wanting to complete the scene; for love was unknown to the dread spirit of the lake.

In the immediate vicinity of the wondering mortal, an elevated throne stood the most conspicuous object. Spiral steps of gold led to the shrine of power. Precious stones sparkling in rich wreaths of enamel, hung a brilliant balustrade in front—and forming the seat of high honour and place, a white

ivory shell rested amid the shining leaves of the ever-flowering lotus. The sea-snake rose in glittering green folds to receive in his soft embrace the recumbent occupant; and ministering spirits of strange form, bearing harp and censer, were ranged in silence around.

Thundering peals of music, and a sudden prostration, proclaimed the presence of the genius of the place; and, amid the clash of lute and timbrel, a cloud of incense floating high over head, disclosed a dwarf crouching on the shell. His aspect was mild and beneficent, and a flowing white beard entirely covered his minute person; but the essence of ethereal intelligence shot from his piercing black eye, and a pale fire played among his long yellow locks. Again the harps rung out the silver notes of welcome, and a vocal chorus was wafted to the delighted ear of the intruder:—

> "Ask for riches, ask for wealth,
> For kingdom, strength, or iron sway,
> Paramount in lady's bower,
> Revenge for wrongs, or length of day."

Borne forward by an irresistible impulse, Thavánan found himself among the kneeling crowd in front of the throne, and a soft still voice proceeded from the high place:—"Mortal, what would'st thou with us? Answer without fear." "Revenge," replied the petitioner, "revenge for injury unprovoked—a house rifled and burnt, a fair sister carried to the lawless harem, and the eyeball

blasted for ever, of one who had heretofore looked upon the great monarch of Shoa as a perfect Deity upon earth."

"Let the child of clay take the oath of allegiance, and be instructed to obtain his wish," responded the being in whose tiny form was concentrated such power and grandeur; and as the words proceeded from his lips, the floor sank under the foot of the proselyte, and Thavánan stood with an attending spirit in the centre of a gloomy grotto.

A blood-red cross, which flashed amid the darkness, revealed sights horrible to behold, and conjured before the imagination thoughts upon which it was then madness to dwell. But daring to the last, the apostate, in presence of the symbol of Christianity, abjured all the high hopes of Heaven. Revenge upon earth filled his soul for the moment; and although the touch of that blessed sign struck through his young heart like the sharp stab of the searing-iron, the fearful oath was firmly and distinctly repeated.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THAVÁNAN THE TORMENTOR.

Months had passed away since the disappearance of the gay Thavánan, once the favourite of the potent monarch of Shoa. Fallen in a single day from his high estate, and deprived of an eye before the scoffing multitude, the innocent victim to intrigue had departed alone and on foot through the gateway of the palace. A thousand cavaliers had that morning obeyed his least command, but not one attended him in the hour of adversity; and shunned as a thing accursed by the brutal mob, he wended his way in moody silence to his home in the green meadow of the Cháka. But the myrmidons of tyranny had outstripped his heavy footstep. Ashes alone proclaimed the site of his late flourishing abode, and a solitary goat, bleating amid the ruins, was all that remained of his once numerous possessions.

The king's *áferoch* had been busy since early morn, and every thing had been swept with the besom of destruction. The flocks and the herds of the disgraced noble were now in the royal pastures,

and his family and relatives, his serfs and drudges, in the household of the despotic monarch. Stunned by the fatal intelligence, Thavánan, followed only by the goat, withdrew unnoticed from the scene of desolation, and his very name was for a time forgotten in the land.

Towards the close of the year, strange reports were circulated from the palace. Unseen hands abstracted the choicest viands—the clearest hydromel was drained ere it reached the expectant lip—and a thousand vagaries were played in the great hall of entertainment. The replenished horn was dashed untasted to the ground, and the delicate morsel transferred from the gaping mouth to the rushes which strewed the floor. The monarch himself was not exempt from the foul plague. His palate was daily cheated of some accustomed dainty; and once, to the horror of the assembled courtiers, a bloody tail was inserted as the royal jaws opened to essay a dish prepared in the seraglio—a loud laugh ringing meanwhile among the rafters of the banqueting-room, which struck upon the ear of the discomfited despot like the merry tones of his exiled favourite.

Priests were called in to the rescue—holy books were read, and consecrated water profusely sprinkled upon the walls, but all without the slightest effect. Doors were closed and double-locked, and guards were planted over every aperture, yet still the pest continued without any abatement. The palace was

in a state of terror and confusion, and the life of the king became weary and burdensome.

Awful voices now sounded at night through the lone apartments, and apparitions haunted the imperial slumbers. The band of nocturnal singers was trebled, but the stout lungs of thirty hale priests, who surrounded the royal bed-chamber, and elevated their voices in psalm to a more frantic key than had ever before been heard in Shoa, failed to intimidate the goblin. Tossing on his couch, the restless monarch sunk weary to sleep, only to be jaded by spectres and evil dreams, in which the wronged Thavánan invariably appeared as the chief tormentor.

The nuisance continued without intermission, until, on the high festival of Easter, harassed and exhausted, the Negoos took his customary seat in the great hall of his ancestors. The groaning table was once again well filled. The holy feast had induced chiefs and nobles in some degree to overcome the fears which had latterly estranged them entirely from the banquet; but there was no joy in the depressed eye, no mirth or hilarity on the tongue of any guest, and a low whisper hardly disturbed the silence which reigned among the dismayed assembly.

The usual infernal sallies were on this day practised exclusively at the royal board, before which the uneasy monarch, occupying a high alcove, and surrounded by pages and men at arms, reclined in his wonted grandeur. Suddenly, another figure

appeared at the table, resting one hand in a curiously wrought earthen vase, and extending the other high, in defiance towards the throne.

"The lost Thavánan!" shouted the crowd: "he has pawned his soul to the fiend"—and swords flashed from the scabbard, as men's hearts were strengthened at the sight of danger in a tangible form. But high over the storm rose the voice of the despot:—"Back, minions, back! we will ourselves deal with the ingrate. Death—but a lingering death—shall be the portion of him who trifles with the pleasure of kings!"

It was indeed Thavánan who confronted the frown of majesty; but how changed from the mild and handsome favourite of former days! White as the feather of the *Rása*, his dishevelled hair floated over the bent shoulder, and stern revenge was graven in the deep furrows of his pallid cheek. His solitary eye gleamed with infernal expression, and bright with the cabalistic figures of magic lore, a golden fillet screened the mutilated orb. Retaining his disdainful position, he cast first a withering glance over the crowd, and then addressed the prince in words of scorn:—

"False monarch, repent in time, for the serpent will turn upon its destroyer. Proud descendant of the race of Solomon, the wit of thy illustrious ancestor is dull in comparison with the wisdom of the meanest disciple of Wárobal. I defy thy myrmidons and thyself!"

And uttering these words, Thavánan instanta-

neously disappeared from before the gaze of the astounded and crest-fallen court.

The waters of the mystic vase hissed and bubbled for a moment. A dark cloud of stifling steam shot aloft, and a thick crust of red ashes, which strewed the board, remained the sole memento of the unwelcome intrusion. Again the hearts of the vassals fell within them; and whilst a gloomy silence pervaded the hall, the triumphant song of the tormentor came ringing among the notes of wild music.

"Far down in the depths of the azure blue,
Away from the mists of the cold dull sky,
Concealed from detested mortal view,
Thavánan lives in liberty."

The courage of the tyrant quailed before the dread powers which were in array against him, and resolved upon an act of tardy justice. Freedom was restored to the degraded and enslaved family, and the confiscated lands were returned threefold to the impoverished race. But the door of the royal harem was closed on the fair daughter of the house of Thavánan, and the wail of the captive maid still cried aloud for redress. Persecution, nevertheless, ceased for a time; and men breathed more freely as their hopes gained ground that the spirit of the avenger was appeased.

On the proclamation of the annual military expedition, the chiefs and nobles of Shoa thronged once more to the capital. Swarming around the

black tents of their warrior leaders, multitudes were spread over hill and dale, and the Amhára host, in all its savage magnificence, had mustered on the highest mountains of Anko. But evil omens and portentous signs were witnessed continually. Dogs howled unceasingly during the livelong night. Throughout the hours of day, the shrike croaked from every bush; and the merlin, turning her back on the passing cavalier, arranged her sober plumage on the stone, without bestowing, in earnest of victory and success, one glimpse of her snow-white breast.

No heed was given by the stern monarch to these portents of coming evil; and on the eve of the intended march the halls of the palace were crowded with all the chivalry of Efát. Boisterous mirth presided at the banquet; but as the last horn of old hydromel was drained to the downfall of the Galla, there arose a fearful cry from the interior enclosure, and bands of eunuchs, with horror depicted upon their withered countenances, burst into the chamber from every direction. Falling prostrate at the footstool of the throne, they proclaimed the disaster which had descended like a thunderbolt on the heretofore unsullied honour of the nation. "He has left the old and the ugly," sobbed the trembling guardians; "but alas for the fair and beautiful ones of the harem, they are all gone on the wings of the evening wind!"

King and nobles rushed into the court-yard, and every hut which crowned the pinnacle of the capital

poured forth its inmates to gaze at the wondrous spectacle. High over the up-reared peak of the mountain soared a rich rosy cloud, lit by the last glorious rays of the setting sun, and charged with a freight more prized than the fine gold of Kordofán. Amhára's fairest daughters were revealed to the unhallowed view of the gaping multitude, and no envious vest shrouded their amazing charms. All had been caught up by the whirlwind in the simple dress of ordinary avocation; and as their light laughing voices came tinkling from above, they carried the bitter truth to the exasperated monarch, that the captives enjoyed their present thraldom as a happy release from the bolt of the harem gate, and the rod of the testy old eunuch.

Dishonoured in the eyes of his subjects, and smarting under the loss of objects which still held a place in his heart, the despot stamped and raged in uncontrollable fury. The beat of the nugáreet and the voice of the herald forthwith proclaimed the abandonment of the projected expedition; and, plunged in the deepest mortification, Asfa Woosen retired to brood in solitude over his unprecedented misfortune.

Morn witnessed the dispersion to their respective quarters of governors and their levies; and before the shades of another evening had closed over the deep valley of the Airára, a breathless courier galloped through the palace-gates with the unlooked-for but welcome tidings, that the ladies of the royal harem

had been discovered reposing unattended among the high fern and heather of the adjacent mountain side.

Again were the parchment faces of the wrinkled eunuchs radiant in sallow lustre. Three hundred mules were instantly dispatched for the conveyance of the truant flock to their fold; and at midnight the muffled damsels were consigned, amid the cracked exultations of attendants, to their wonted cages in the palace.

But the fair sister of Thavánan was not of the number, neither could any clue be obtained to her fate or condition. A small scroll had indeed been discovered on the turf, sealed and bearing the address of the ruler of Shoa—a gigantic glow-worm, attached by a single yellow hair to the envelope, having particularly attracted attention to that which it was conjectured might contain the desired information.

The curiosity of the king finally overcame the cautious scruples of the priesthood, who advised the immediate destruction of the missive. As the wax crumbled between his fingers, a roar of thunder shook the palace to its foundations, whilst a stream of black dust, pouring from the parchment to the table, gradually assumed the semblance of a pillar of sand agitated by the fierce whirl of the storm. A pungent odour impregnated the apartment, and the crackling sound of the devouring element was followed by the presence of the dread tormentor.

"I have come once again, monarch of the hard

heart, to repay the debt which is still due, and, blasted like the much-injured Thavánan, thy soul may henceforward entertain some feeling of pity for thy fellow-men. Listen to thy doom. No mercy was shown unto me, and none shall be extended to thee. Thy son, after a short reign of terror, shall fall by the hand of a slave, and die cursing the author of his existence; and thy son's son shall bear upon his disfigured countenance the searing mark of his ancestor's cruelty. My face thou shalt see no more—Spirit of the flame, perform thy task." A bright flash shot from the centre of the dark threatening column, and curled towards the king, a sickening sulphuric fume filling the presence chamber, and the necromancer vanished in the thick smoke.

Plunged for hours in a death-like stupor, Asfa Woosen was only aroused from his lethargy to bewail the loss of the left eye, which had been scorched in the socket by the contact of the fierce flame. The calamity greatly softened and influenced the actions of his after-life; and torture and mutilation grew gradually out of custom in the kingdom of Shoa.

During the reign of his grandson, the one-eyed Sáhela Selássie, there dwelt in a mossy cavern, among the recesses of the forest of Manték, a hermit of renowned sanctity. Father Peter was universally feared and beloved, but none knew from whence he derived food or nourishment. The skin

of the agazin formed his humble garb, and a rude leathern girdle encircled his loins. His charms and amulets were never known to fail, and his language was not as that of other men. Crowds daily gathered round his cave in the rock to receive on their knees the benediction of the recluse; but no one had ever entered the cell, and few cared to pass it after nightfall. Moans and cries of agony then mingled with the midnight blast; and the sound of the scourge was often heard amid prayers for deliverance from the evil one

On a fresh morning of May, when the roses and jessamine were scenting the dewy air, the wild flowers springing over the face of the green meadow, and birds warbled pleasantly amid the rich foliage, the peasants came as usual to listen to the words of other days, and to receive the blessing of the austere anchorite. But the accustomed seat was vacant, and no answer being returned to the voice of inquiry, the boldest entered the retreat. Curiously emblazoned scrolls and relics were strewed among the nooks and mouldy recesses of the damp grotto; the body of the venerable hermit was stretched in eternal slumber upon a bed of sharp stones; and the tale soon spread through the land that the holy Father Peter—now no more—was indeed the dread necromancer Thavánan, who had thus, by the continued penance of half a century, expiated his fierce act of apostasy.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE REIGN OF SUPERSTITION.

Not a monk is there in any of the lone monasteries of Shoa, not a hermit of the many in her cold mountains, not a dwarf nor a decrepit priest who has renounced the society of his fellow-men, but enjoys the reputation of being fully competent to blast the harvest at pleasure, to poison the fountain, and to render the able-bodied incapable. The thoughts of all classes move in a dense atmosphere of superstition. Talismans, written in mystic characters, if mixed with the seeds and leaves of potent witch plants, gathered by the hand of the forest recluse, afford a feeling of security which is not to be extracted from the pages of the Gospel; nor does any one ever venture to mount his mule without a preservative against the spear of the bandit, or the sharp knife of the heathen.

Savage man, obtaining only through the medium of his own wishes and imagination a glimmering idea of the invisible and supreme Power, seeks some tangible object of veneration, and some ostensible source of protection. Thus the Abyssinian, whose vague religious ideas afford him but small consolation in the hour of tribulation, and but

little reliance of security or deliverance in the day of danger and distress, reposes implicit faith in the doctrine of amulets, which present a substance stamped with a mystic and supernatural character, and one capable of being attached individually to himself. The arms and neck are therefore clothed in a perfect panoply of charms against the influence of every misfortune and disease, whether experienced or anticipated; and the *tulsim,* which is a worked zone studded with minute leathern pockets, containing sacred spells enveloped in double and treble wrappers, encircles the waist of every man, woman, and child, throughout the Christian dominions of Sáhela Selássie, who himself reposes firm faith in their efficacy.

The influence of the evil eye exercises a strong control over the minds of all. Bad spirits are believed to roam about the earth and the waters, and to occupy houses after dark, whence the Amhára never ventures to throw fluid on the ground, lest the dignity of some unseen elf should be violated. The *Beza,* or sacrifice for the sick, is considered lawful and efficacious, and is frequently resorted to. The bullock, as the type of the invalid, after being driven round his couch amid singing and clamour, is slaughtered outside the threshold; or an egg is turned thrice towards the head of the patient, and then broken beside him. St. Michael is, by many of the more ignorant, supposed to be the Almighty. The Virgin Mary is considered the creatress of the

world; and *Sunday* is understood to have been a saint of surpassing sanctity, greatly superior both to St. George and to St. Michael, on which account he claims one day out of the seven, whereas other saints enjoy their festival only once during the month.

No Amhára will venture to destroy a serpent save on Saturday or Sunday, when the sight of one of these reptiles is deemed a favourable omen. In common with the heathen Gallá, the Christians of Shoa make annual votive sacrifices in June to *Sár*, the evil spirit—notwithstanding its strict prohibition by royal proclamation. Three men and a woman, who understand how to deal with the Evil One, having assembled at the place appointed, proceed to perform the ceremony in a house newly swept. A ginger-coloured hen, a red she-goat, or a male Adel goat with a white collar, is sacrificed; and the blood of the victim, having been mixed with grease and butter, is secretly placed during the night in a narrow alley, when all who step therein are supposed to receive the malady of the invalid, who is thus restored to perfect health. During a visit some years ago to Motátit, the king perceived evidences of this pagan ceremony in the streets; and tracing the rite to a wealthy individual, who had caused it to be performed in order to free himself of disease, the honour of true religion was speedily vindicated by the transfer to the royal coffers of all the worldly substance of the delinquent.

Under cover of the night, a thread of cotton yarn

is often stretched by the hired sorcerer completely round some devoted tenement; and the extremities having been connected by means of an iron link, well imbued in blood, the walls and doorposts are freely sprinkled and bedaubed with gore. Day dawns upon the incantation, which is believed to be the work of the Devil himself; and among all the assembled multitude, who consider that some heavy calamity, if not instant death, would follow the act, there is not to be found one individual sufficiently bold to remove the spell, and thus deliver the inmates from its withering influence. Since the king's arrival in the capital, the appearance of the bloody finger on the wall had thrown the inhabitants into the deepest consternation; and to the astonishment of every by-stander, a missionary of the Church of England tore away the charm without any evil consequences following his rashness. That very night, however, the defeated necromancer planned an attack to rob the clergyman's premises, and it was only defeated by the extra vigilance preserved in consequence of the exposure of the impostor.

The drum of the water kelpy is heard by the credulous native in the echo of every roaring cataract, and the wretch drowning in the swollen torrent is believed to be dragged under the overwhelming wave as the favourite food of the malicious spirit of the deep. Divers plants and herbs possess properties and qualities the most baneful; and a bunch of the *Fegain* grass, if skilfully cast upon the person

of an obnoxious enemy, produces dire disease and speedy death. Sorcerers and necromancers attaining the respectable age of four and five hundred years exist in numbers in many parts of the land, flitting through the air, and riding upon the wings of the wind; and unbidden and invisible guests, such as Thavánan the Tormentor, enter the banqueting hall, to rob the festive board of its choicest viands.

Hid from mortal gaze, and realizing upon earth all the delights of paradise, the magic village of Dooka Stephános forms the never-failing topic of all wonder-loving souls, and the poetic fancy of Abyssinia has been fairly exhausted in descriptions of this rare scene of blissful enjoyment. "Its sleep-inviting groves and grassy lawns are situated on the overflowing Nile; and there, released from the shackles of wedlock, beautiful females abound. Potent liquors pour on in never-drying streams, and the earth yields her spontaneous fruits without care or labour. But shrouded in magic mist, these Elysian fields open their portals only to those mortals of commanding form and handsome features, on whom the glance of favour has been cast by the bewitching inmates of the enchanted garden. Human endeavour is ineffectual to unriddle the mystery in which it is enveloped; and the dread art of the sorcerer and his most potent talismans, prove alike unavailing to loosen the spell for the advantage of those on whom Dame Nature has

bestowed a crooked figure, or even an ill-starred visage."

As in the dark ages, dwarfs are nevertheless treated with considerable respect, and regarded with the utmost fear. Many of the most learned and praiseworthy in the land are to be found among those who have been created during nature's freaks. The monarch's father confessor, a perfect Asmodeus in appearance, is of extremely diminutive stature, but he is possessed of singular good feeling, and forms a gratifying contrast to the majority of his countrymen. The chiefs and nobles often select their secretaries and household priests with reference to their bodily imperfections; and the most erudite sage in the capital, whose charms and talismans are esteemed all-powerful, and who knoweth every plant from the "cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," sustains his character for wisdom and for lore, as much by the deformity of his appearance as by the brilliancy of his understanding.

Sickness and misfortune are usually ascribed to the influence of the evil eye of the *Booda*, or sorcerer. Long consultations are held to discover from whose sinister glance the calamity has emanated; and when suspicion has gradually settled into conviction, the most implacable hatred is conceived towards the delinquent; and although concealed under that garb of indifference which the savage can so successfully assume, yet the op-

portunity of revenge is never suffered to pass unheeded in after-life. Hailoo, the father of Oubié, the Nero-like Dedjasmach of Tigré, added much to his previous notoriety by the extermination of all the *Boodas* who fell within his murderous reach. Superstition exulted in reeking hecatombs of human victims; and the love and veneration of his subjects knew no bounds on his last summary act of collecting together and roasting to death thirteen hundred miserable wretches, who were suspected to possess, and to have exerted with success, the influence of "the evil eye."

By the credulous Abyssinian, every blacksmith and worker in iron is held to be endowed with supernatural powers, and to be able to transform himself at pleasure into the likeness of a wolf or a hyena. It is a common practice amongst this class of handicrafts to fasten a metal collar about the neck of the whelps of those animals, and turn them loose; when the badge being retained through life, and occasionally seen, the fabulous stories in circulation are strengthened in the eyes of the uninitiated.

The presence of any Christian emblem, or portion of Holy Writ, is supposed sufficient to neutralise the labours of the Vulcan. No metal can be welded within sight of the cross; and should any scrap of the Bible be worn on the person of the by-standers, the desired figure can never be imparted. Of this belief an instance was afforded

shortly after our return from AngolláIa, when a bar of iron was to be transformed into a tire for the wheel of a gun-carriage. The small draft of air created by a pair of primitive native bellows proving of none avail, the smiths declared aloud that the phenomenon arose from some holy charm. Badges and emblems, spells and amulets, were cast aside by all; but the labour was renewed without any better effect, and the artizans stood aghast. A pair of British forge bellows were now produced, and the assembly were requested to don their paper armour, and to stand round the anvil. The potent blast poured from the nozzle, and under the brawny arm of one of the European soldiers, the sparks flew far and wide. In five minutes the work was completed, to the dismay of the Abyssinian magicians, who came privately to request of me that no further public exhibition of the sort might thenceforth be made, lest their name and their glory should be extinguished throughout the land.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

EXCURSION ALONG THE NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER OF EFÁT.

The disparaging reflections cast by the chivalrous people of Shoa, in consequence of our refusal to slaughter defenceless pagans during the murderous expedition to Entótto, rendered it imperative that some decided step should be taken by which to wipe out the stain, and restore the tarnished lustre of the British name. The destruction of an adult elephant, which is reckoned equivalent to that of forty Galla, is an achievement that had not been accomplished within the memory of the present age, although mentioned in traditions connected with the exploits of the most renowned Æthiopic warriors. I accordingly solicited permission to visit the distant wilderness of Giddem, on the northern frontier of Efát, in the dense forests of which the giant of the mammalia was reported to reside—a pretext which further afforded plausible grounds for exploring a portion of the country reputed to be amongst the most fertile and productive in Abyssinia.

The king opened his eyes wider than usual at this unprecedented application. "My children,"

he returned deliberately, "how can this be? Elephants are not to be slain with rifle balls. They will demolish you; and what answer am I then to give? The gun is the medicine for the Galla in the tree, but it has no effect upon the *zihoon*[1]."

Finding me resolved, however, His Majesty's most gracious permission was finally accorded to depart forthwith, and orders were issued to a royal messenger who was appointed to accompany us, commanding the governors of provinces through which the route lay, to afford every assistance in their power to "the strong strangers of the Negoos." But all assertions relative to the possibility of destroying the monarch of the forest were still received with an incredulous shake of the head; and whilst not the smallest expectations were entertained at court of the success of the Gyptzis, the greatest ridicule attended an undertaking which, by all classes at the capital, was considered certain to prove alike foolhardy, dangerous, and futile.

Instructions had been issued that the king's guests were to be conducted by the royal road over the Gorabéla mountain, a singular mark of condescension, partaken but by few in the realm. This permission enabled us to enjoy a most extensive panorama from the heather-grown heights. Mamrat reared her stupendous head perpendicularly from the dark-wooded bosom of the valley, and seemed half buried in the clouds. The pali-

[1] Elephant.

saded buildings of the palace covering the slope of its isolated hill frowned in pride over the numberless circular houses of the straggling eastern metropolis. Clumps of the sombre juniper, and spreading cossos hung with red garlands of mast, formed vistas on every side. On the one hand rose the lofty blue range of Bulga, and on the other the eye ranged uncontrolled over the boundless plains of the savage Adaïel, spread out below like a great chart, and embracing a prospect of many hundred square miles. In the centre soared the stern crater of Abida—the beacon which, in days long gone, marked the dominions of the proud emperors of Æthiopia, when, according to the traditionary couplet, "their sceptre swayed from Azulo to the Bashilo, and from Errur to Gondar."

The porters at the royal lodge were on the alert, and adjurations by the king's life were not wanting to deter our advance to the Airára. "*Bu Negoos,*" "*Bu Sáhela Selássie amlak,*" were talismanic words energetically vociferated, and a heavy staff was thumped across the path in earnest of its being closed to plebeian transit. But where is the Abyssinian who is proof against bribery and corruption? Beads will force a passage when the mandate of the throne is received with incredulity, and the dollars of Maria Theresa, if possessing all the requisite marks, will insure participation even in a crown monopoly.

An exceedingly steep path conducts to the summit of the Cháka; but it is here paved throughout with

boulders, so supported at intervals by transverse beams, as to form a succession of clumsy steps, constituting the only made road in the kingdom of Shoa. The heather ceases with the Gorabéla mountain; and from the summit of the now bare range the route we were to follow strikes off near the residence of a petty governor, who bears the singular name of "*Mout bai nore legne.*"

"Oh, that there were no death for me!" is the interpretation thereof; but judging from the appearance of the lord of the manor, who numbers some threescore years, he is not likely long to find his wish realized. Engaged in earnest conversation with the old man, was Ayto Guebroo, who, in consequence of inability to check the repeated rebellions of the Loomi, by whom he so recently was wounded, had at last been deprived of his government and of his silver sword, and was on his way to the presence of the despot in deep disgrace.

The Abyssinian verdure is singularly evanescent, a month without a shower being sufficient to dry up the rich herbage, and to darken the hue of the foliage; but the "rain of Bounty," which usually falls in February, giving a fresh impulse to vegetation, the hills and valleys again teem with abundance. November was fast drawing to a close, and the aspect of the country generally was brown and withered. The best pastures were covered with the sleek beeves swept off from Finfinni, and the cornfields were yellow with the royal crops now under

the sickle, whilst in the numerous threshing-floors muzzled oxen were already treading out the grain.

Our route led across Motátit and the Toro Mesk, through dales and over hills abutting upon the face of the bluff frontier of Shoa, in which are the sources of many of the more distant tributaries to the blue Nile. Never was there a tract more destitute of birds or wild animals, a few plovers and larks, with some of the more common species of *Rodentia*, being the only objects of natural history observed during a march of twelve miles, which led to the halting ground in the centre of the little village of Asóphee, opposite to the frowning mountain Koorománia.

Under our flimsy cotton awnings, the night proved intensely cold; and on resuming the journey at an early hour the ensuing morning, over a swelling country thickly dotted with Christian hamlets, we found the more sheltered pools by the road-side covered with a thin coating of ice, the first witnessed since our arrival in Abyssinia. At the village of Amaráguê, hospitable entertainment had been prepared by Ayto Egázoo, whose name signifies, "May they buy." This notable warrior had, prior to the late foray, introduced himself to me, somewhat à-propos of his title, by an ingenious but abortive attempt to sell an unsound horse. Dismounting on the right side from the identical straw-coloured steed, he now placed himself, with shoulders bared, in the middle of the road, and by the life of the king adjured us to enter

his abode, in order to partake of a sheep that had been expressly slaughtered.

Wulleta Selássie, his comely partner, daughter to Shishigo, the governor of Shoa-meda, had kindled in the dark hall the fiercest of fires, and immediately on the termination of complimentary inquiries, an ox-hide being spread, the heavy door was barred to exclude the evil eye. Raw collops having been steadily rejected, bones, singed in a somewhat cannibal-like fashion, were rapidly circulated by the attentive host. "Take the eye," he repeated, coaxingly, to each in turn, presenting at the same time betwixt his finger and thumb the extracted orb of the deceased mutton—"do, the eye is the daintiest part. No!—well you *must* eat this marrow," crushing the uncooked shank with a grinding-stone handed by a slave girl, and extending the splintered fragments to be sucked. Overflowing bumpers of sour beer having been filled in a gloomy corner at a huge earthen jar, each horn was tasted by the cup-bearer from the hollow of his palm, in demonstration of the absence of poison. The surplus repast, fluid as well as solid, quickly disappeared under the united efforts of the retinue; and a bead necklace having been hung about the neck of the lady's hopeful son and heir, we finally effected our escape from the oven-like apartment, with the aid of divers promises made to both master and mistress, and sundry pieces of silver disbursed to silence a host of importunate menials.

Ayto Egázoo rode forth, in accordance with etiquette, "to see the party off." From the court-yard of his snug but dirty domicile, Tegulet, and the blue hills of Argobba and of the Wollo Galla, bounded the extensive prospect. Regaining the road, we crossed in succession the Tekroos-Bádo, Moosh, and Goodawurud rivers, all remote sources of the blue Nile. On the banks of the latter stands the monastery of St. George, famous as having been left unmolested when the district was in the hands of the Galla, many of whom are even said to have been converted to Christianity. Goodawurud was the title of a potent chieftain, who, with Merkurri, Amadich, and Logo, held the country after Graan's desolating visit, until expelled by Asfa Woosen; and a considerable portion of the revenues are now applied to the maintenance of the monastery of Medák, whose superior, the Alaka Amda Zion, has charge of the heir presumptive.

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the position selected by the cowled fraternity of St. George; large bands of whom, lounging away their hours of idleness beneath the funereal junipers in which the retreat is deeply embosomed, were for once aroused from listless apathy by the passing cavalcade of white strangers. The land swarms with friars, monks, and anchorites, who are habited in yellow dresses, as the badge of poverty, or in the prepared skin of the antelope. Usually licentious in their manners, they roam through the country a perfect

pest and plague to society. Men become monks at any period of life. Those who are afflicted with grievous sickness, vow that in event of recovery they will abandon the world, and transfer all their moveables to the church. The rich often deliver over their property to their children, who are bound to support them until death. The poor subsist upon the bounty of the king and of the community; and many never enter the cells of the monastery at all, but with their wives reside at ease in their own homes, having assumed the counterfeit piety of the order solely for the sake of defrauding their creditors—since, however deeply involved, all former scores may be cleared off with the ease and rapidity of the most indulgent court of insolvency, by the simple process of "putting on angels' clothing."

The skin of the Agázin is usually adopted as the garb of humiliation; and this emblem, together with the unwashed person, is intended to commemorate the legend of their great founder Eustathius, who boasted of having performed no ablution during a long term of existence, and who miraculously crossed the river Jordan, floating securely upon his greasy cloak. The prophet Samuel is also sometimes referred to as affording another notable example of the advantage extended by the mantle of hide, in the asserted fact of his having sailed seven days across a great sea, borne in safety, with his disciples, upon his leathern robe.

Throughout Shoa. lakes are believed to form

the great rendezvous of evil spirits; and in one called Nugáreet-fer, at the foot of the hills. the drum of the water kelpy is frequently heard, to the no small terror of the superstitious auditors. Shortly after crossing the stony bed of the Daimadamash, a road branches off to Angollála and Debra Berhán, past the monastery of Máskalie Ghedam, a title signifying "My cross is a convent." Beyond the Dewásha, a second strikes northward to Gondar, past the seat of government of Zenama Work, the Queen-dowager, which occupies a beautifully rounded tumulus styled Zalla Dingai, "The rolling stone."

"Bad people," saith the tradition attached to this spot, "were one day seated upon a rock that formerly occupied the summit of the hill. They were telling lies, and busied in contriving tricks, by which to circumvent their neighbours. Suddenly the mass gave way, and all who sat thereon, being precipitated into the deep torrent that rolls beneath to join the river Mofa, were crushed to atoms for their evil doings."

After fording the Goor river, and ascending a high ridge, the Queen's white palace forms a striking object in the landscape; and beyond it is a square eminence, where, under the eye of the erudite Alaka Woldáb, the reigning monarch passed his earlier years, until the assassination of his sire opened to him the accession. From this point we obtained an extensive view over Geshe and Efrata,

with the Great Sáka mountains stretching towards the Nile. A little further on the heather-grown range suddenly terminates in an abrupt descent of full three thousand feet, at the foot of which lies the rugged province of Efát, blending into the blue plains of the Adaïel. The great beacon Azulo, with the wide crater of Abida, hazy and hot, were visible in the east. Afrubba, and the high hills of the Ittoo Galla, rose in the distance, and a perfect chaos of rude disjointed mountains lay piled towards Ankóber, seeming as though they had been gathered from many countries, and pitched together by giant handfuls, to fill up the deep intervening chasm.

Hitherto the road had been rough and stony—the eminences steep and bare; and after passing the sombre groves of St. George, the only redeeming feature was the church dedicated to "our Lady," reposing quietly amid the rich foliage of the "cosso," and other large-leafed forest trees. In many respects the face of the country now resembled the sides of the great Indian Ghauts—masses of light brown, chequered with pale yellow; but stubble or standing corn in every accessible nook and corner usurped the place of the wild grass, with which nature so prodigally clothes the mountain scenery of the East. Numerous parties, consisting of twenty or thirty peasants, carrying on their heads bales of coarse cotton cloth as tribute to the king, passed us at intervals—the sword by their side and

the spear in their hand, indicating that the frontier along which they journeyed was in a far from settled state.

This tract of high land, which forms the water-shed between the Nile and the Háwash, is richly cultivated and abundantly irrigated—a fresh stream, on its course to the former river, intersecting the western side of the range, and forming a deep valley every second or third mile. After leaving the Goor, however, the face of the country, becoming more sterile, is covered with heather, and for the last few miles to the top of the Túrmáber pass, neither village nor cultivation is to be seen.

During the descent, which passes through a gap in the precipitous trap rocks, and is steeper and even worse than that of the Cháka, the bleak and lofty peaks of Arámba, Gaifaiyétto, Wóti, Mamrat, Kondie, and Wofásha, are severally revealed to view; these forming a continuation of the great mountain range which fortifies the whole eastern frontier of Shoa, from Bulga to Worra Káloo, and extends thence through Anībásel, Yedjow, and Lasta, to Simien, the highest point of Abyssinia. From the foot of this pass the road leads across the Telúnkó, close to Debra Séna, a small eminence covered as with an inverted bowl, by a dense, cabbage-shaped clump of junipers, concealing St. George's church—a celebrated shrine for the performance of vows and orisons, which is visited from great distances. Hence the route winds to the bottom of a deep

wooded dell, rich in botanical specimens, where the clear stream of the Telúnko is again crossed, to the face of a steep acclivity leading to Dokáket, the ancient capital of Emmaha Yasoos, third monarch of Shoa.

The sun was dipping below the opposite range as a halt was proclaimed by the King's guide at the house of Ayto Abaiyo Gurwa, the governor of the district, whose hospitality proved unbounded. For a full hour he continued shouting and scolding, ordering and countermanding; and whilst he expressed the greatest mortification at my declining to appropriate two fat oxen, in addition to liberal supplies of sheep, bread, mead, and beer, he was with difficulty prevailed upon to accept a present that I had prepared in acknowledgment; a piece of self-denial rarely experienced at the hands of a native of Southern Abyssinia.

"But," he added, "henceforth you may know me as your friend; therefore send to me frequently, and I will tell you when I have any concern. Wolda Mariam, my henchman, who is here, is in my confidence. Furthermore, he will visit you on my part. Appoint now a *báldoroba*, who may introduce him, that access be not impeded." The party nominated as the medium of communication stepped to the front, and the two, baring their shoulders, and bowing the one to the other, fell back into their respective places.

Ankóber is the capital of the eastern division of

the kingdom of Shoa, in which are comprised the provinces of Basso, Dabdábo, Karába, Kawt, Mans, Giddem, Abómesa, Mahhfood, and Dokáket. The last-named especially forms the scene of constant inroads from the savage Adaïel, whose country lies little more than a cannon shot below; the Amhára, who on the Fárri boundary are severely punished by the politic monarch for taking a life, even in retribution, flocking hither to entitle themselves to wear the decoration of the "akodáma," the *ne plus ultra* of their ambition. And such is the bitter hatred subsisting between the two nations so closely bordering upon each other, that but for the lofty hills and cold climate of Ankóber, the Moslems, who are the far braver race, would doubtless have paid its Christian population a hostile visit long ere now. On the adjacent northern frontier, the intricate labyrinth of broken ravines, over which our view had ranged in the morning, forms a strong natural barrier against the Wollo Galla, whose incursions are nevertheless frequent; whilst the Túlema, residing in the Sáka range, entertain as decided a disinclination to descend from their own bleak hills, as do the Amhára to visit the hot valleys and forests of the Adaïel, which stretch beyond the borders of Efát.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SHREW OF MAHHFOOD.

BIDDING adieu to the hospitable host, we continued our journey along the eastern side of the Turmáber range, through a country considerably improved in point of beauty. There was a warmth of appearance about the numerous hamlets, quite in unison with the increased temperature of this lower tract. Gayer flowers bloomed by the way-side; more brilliant birds fluttered among the thick corinda hedges, through which peeped the eglantine, the honeysuckle, and the blackberry; and the entire prospect, although exceedingly broken, was covered with the most luxuriant grass, in every spot where the hand of the cultivator had not been busy. The slope of each hill and abrupt eminence was wooded with junipers and other fantastic evergreens; fields of yellow safflower glowed in golden tints; and teff, growing in the depths of the valleys, resembled greatly the waving rice-fields of Asia.

Dame Twotit, one of the king's choristers, who accompanied the army to Garra Gorphoo, and was now making a professional tour of the provinces, joined us *en route*, carrying a small wicker parasol;

and as she ambled along upon her mule, with the butter pouring in streams over her shoulders, through the influence of the solar rays, the good lady was pleased to chant extemporaneous couplets in honour of the war about to be waged against the beasts of the forest. "The Gyptzis will slay the elephant, whereof all the warriors of Amhára are afraid"—whilst it formed the burden of her song, conveyed an opinion diametrically opposed to that entertained by the public; and the followers, inspired by the words of a woman, took up the sentiment, and made the valleys re-echo to their martial chorus, which attracted to the roadside the inhabitants of every hamlet in the vicinity.

Mahhfood, a village hemmed in by high kolquál hedges, formed the termination of the march. Its natural fortifications having uniformly proved insurmountable, this district has never been conquered either by the Galla or Mohammadans. The residence of the governor, who has been honoured with the hand of Woïzoro Birkenich, daughter of Queen Besábesh by her former marriage, stands on the apex of the loftiest of the many isolated hills; and in accordance with the precaution invariably taken to prevent surprise on these disturbed frontiers, it is surrounded by a formidable fence. Our camp was pitched at the foot; and the thermometer having stood in the morning at 32° on the summit of Dokáket, the difference in temperature was considerably felt during the afternoon, when the

mercury mounted to 90° under the flimsy palls which formed our only screen.

Having been specially recommended to Ayto Gádeloo, whose acquaintance I had formed during the late foray, we paid him a visit of ceremony in the cool of the evening, and were received and entertained according to the perfection of Abyssinian etiquette. The whole of the dirty domestics and household slaves were mustered on the occasion, to witness the presentation of gifts brought for the "Emabiet[1]," who, like the rest of the princesses royal, displayed unequivocal signs of being sole and undisputed mistress of the establishment. Fat, fair, and forty, she was seated in a gloomy recess, upon an "algá," and partially screened from view by the intervention of a lusty handmaiden. The good man, who occupied a corner of the throne, presented in his owlish features the very personification of a well-trained, hen-pecked husband, for years accustomed to the iron rule of the shrew—and so complete was her monopoly, that he could be said to boast of little beyond the empty title of governor of Mahhfood.

The lady put a few preliminary questions touching the number of wives we each possessed, and appeared highly to approve of the matrimonial code that limited the number to one. But throughout

[1] i. e. "The mother of the house"—a title of honour employed in speaking of the queen, the princesses royal, the mistress of a family, and the holy Virgin, who is usually styled "Our Lady."

the dingy mansion there was a miserable assumption of regal dignity which considerably retarded conversation, by imparting to the whole ceremony an air of unbending stiffness. The host, who was either unable or unwilling to answer any interrogatories respecting his own country, subjected us to a tiresome catechism; and like the Arab Bedouin, who formed his estimate of the poverty of Europe by the fact of its producing neither dates nor camels, Ayto Gádeloo conceived a passing indifferent idea of Great Britain, from the discovery that it boasted of no mules.

"Have you máshela, and dáboo, and túllah[2] in your country?" he inquired, whilst his fair partner feasted her eyes upon the "pleasing things" presented, in none of which it was evident the lord of the creation was destined to participate—"Oh, you have all these; well, and have you oxen and sheep, and horses and mules?"—"How, no mules?" he shouted in derision, while the slaves tittered and hid their black faces, and their mistress laughed outright—"Why, what a miserable country yours must be!"

Shortly after daybreak we resumed our journey through very thriving crops, descending to the valley of the Robi, where the eye was greeted by a perfect scene of Eastern cultivation. Juwarree, fifteen feet high, teff, chilies, onions, oil-plant, and

[2] Anglicè, "maize, bread, and beer."

cotton, in many parts artificially irrigated, flourished with the utmost luxuriance on a rich black soil, under a climate resembling that of the more favoured spots in Western India. The scenery of this richly-wooded and well-watered valley was not a little enhanced by the beauty of the surrounding mountains, of which the numerous peaks were tufted with trees, and crowned by populous hamlets, whilst the redundance of vegetation, and the growth and quality of the cotton, with a soil adapted for the production of sugar. coffee, and rice, proclaimed the locality to possess the very highest natural advantages as an emigrating settlement.

In the broad shallow channel of the Robi, upwards of two hundred yards across, which pours into the Háwash between a belt of verdant acacias two sparkling streams of the clearest water, are found an inexhaustible supply of round pebbles of every size, which being assorted, are used by the Amhára fusileers in lieu of the usual iron bullets. They are even employed as slugs and shot, and form a large item in the tribute paid by this district, wherein alone they are obtained. Crossing the river, the road entered a thick jungle; and we were warned to be on our guard, as it had long been infested by banditti called Gowezza, composed principally of Christian outcasts, who absconded either from fear of their creditors, or of church censure. During the great famine in the year of St. Luke, their numbers were augmented by from five

to six hundred Christian, Mohammadan, and Galla vagabonds, who formed themselves into a lawless band, and renouncing all forms of religion, took up their permanent abode in the greenwood, where, favoured by the nature of the ground, they could plunder and kidnap with impunity.

To the notes of an Abyssinian war chorus, which still proclaimed our hostile designs on the lordly elephant, the plain was crossed without any demonstrations on the part of the outlaws; and leaving the high peaks of Chureecha and Sangóta on the right, with Mungut and Sallaïsh on the left, the road ascended the Gozi mountain by a narrow pass, leading under a peak on which stands a house belonging to Wulasma Mohammad. Abomésa, forming the termination of the range towards the Adaïel frontier, limits his power in this direction, his rights as Abogáz extending westward to Bulga. The district of Gozi is entirely peopled by Mohammadans styled Arablet, whose progenitors are said by tradition to have been left there prior to the reign of Nagási, first king of Shoa. Hoossain, Wahabit, and Abdool Kurreem, generals probably detached from the victorious army of Graan, are represented to have come from Mecca, and to have taken possession of the country—the legend assigning to the first of these warriors as his capital the populous village of Medina, which is conspicuous on a cone among the mountains shortly after entering the valley of the Robi.

Having descended the Gozi range, the road led across an extensive flat, styled "the wilderness of Giddem," which forms the neutral ground betwixt the Amhára and the Adaïel. But less than four years have elapsed since the great chief of the Gibdósa, at the head of his whole clan, made a sudden inroad, and swept off all the cattle in this district. The Christians pursuing the invaders, slew great numbers in an engagement fought near Rása, and recovered a portion of the spoil; but on their march back, they were in turn overtaken by Anbássa Ali, who destroyed upwards of one thousand.

The valley of Giddem is watered by four fine rivers, which we crossed in succession—the Sower, "mystery," the Ashmák, "man who deals in sorcery," the Gásha Bakindee, "shield on my arm," and the Jow-wahá, "stupid water"—the whole of which, uniting after their escape from the mountains, join the Háwash not far from Mount Azulo. The Gásha Bakindee, the banks of which are precipitous and thickly wooded, is represented to have been the scene of numberless murders on the part of the Wollo Galla, who are here in the constant habit of way-laying travellers through the wilderness. To the eastward of the valley, therefore, the hand of the cultivator has been stayed, and the forest, standing in large gloomy patches, choked with reeds and wild canes, is tenanted by troops of guinea-fowl, by the boar, the lion, and the elephant;

but to the westward, on either side of the road, the cultivation is magnificent—the soil, the climate, and the abundant supply of water, with the shelter afforded by the surrounding hills, proving especially favourable to the labours of the agriculturist. Traces of the huge tenants of the shades so worthy of their bulk, were however visible among the adjacent crops, and the dread entertained of their visits was well evinced by numerous elevated platforms, constructed upon the highest trees that bordered the rich plantations of cotton and red pepper.

On the sedge-grown banks of the Sower, beneath the spreading branches of a venerable tamarind, we found Ayto Abaiyo, with a numerous retinue, reposing during the noontide heat, on his way to assume the district of Mungust, to the south-south-west, the late governor having been summarily removed on charges of oppression. In the principal town, Mosábiet, is held one of the chief markets in the kingdom, the high road to Manchettee, the Wollo, and the Yedjow Galla passing through it. The numerous mounted retinue of the haughty functionary had conjured up misgivings in the mind of our guide, who, since leaving Mahhfood, had never ceased allusions to the "Gowezza;" nor was it without much persuasion and remonstrance that he was finally induced to cross the river with us, and to hail from a respectful distance the suspicious band of his own countrymen.

Leaving the valley of Giddem, seven miles in length, the route led over a very broken and stony rise into a third vale, also richly cultivated, whence commenced the ascent of the Kokfári range. We halted for the night at the village of Zumbo, pleasantly situated on a pretty green terrace on the mountain side between Manya and Dai Mariam, and I despatched the King's messenger in advance to apprize Ayto Tsánna, the governor, of our arrival within his jurisdiction. Supplies poured in from all directions; but although now far beyond the reach of the much-dreaded freebooters, it was not destined that our hours should be passed in peace. Attracted by the smell of honey, a legion of huge black ants swarmed into the tent; and invading every bed, caused one slumberer after the other to start in madness to his feet. In vain we obtained a light, and massacred thousands upon thousands—a fresh army streamed upon the track of the annihilated troops; and so unremitting were their persecutions, that we ultimately found it necessary to strike the camp, and remove to a remote stubble field, where, although fairly beaten from the field, pursuit was fortunately baffled, and their proximity speedily forgotten.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOSPITALITY AT KOKFÁRI.

"MAY the guests of the Negoos come quickly!—all is prepared for their reception," was the message received early the ensuing morning from the old governor, to whom our party stood specially consigned by the king, and who was, moreover, an acquaintance made in the late expedition, where he had appeared in capacity of "wobo," or general commanding the rear guard. After ascending the steep face of the mountain, and gradually turning the shoulder of the range, we reached his residence, occupying the summit of a steep hill, well fortified with palisades and wicker-work. A deep grove of tall trees on the opposite eminence concealed the monastery of Kasaiyát, famous as the depository of the chronicles of Saint Eustathius, and beyond, a wild tract of forest land, intersected by serpentine rivers, stretched away to the blue hills of Efrata and Worra Káloo.

Approaching the residence of Ayto Tsánna, I caused a salute to be fired in his honour by our escort; and being forthwith ushered into his presence, we found the kind-hearted and hospitable

veteran seated in the inner porch of his spacious house, where skins had been spread for our accommodation. Nothing could surpass the munificence of our reception. Bread, honey, butter, hydromel, beer, poultry, and eggs, were supplied in princely abundance, whilst oxen and sheep were slaughtered for the use of the followers, and corn and grass supplied to the numerous train of horses and mules. A spacious domicile was provided, in which, after a fire had been lighted to dislodge evil spirits, our repast was spread; and during the greater portion of the afternoon the liberal and intelligent host continued to witness the drill of the artillery escort, performed at his special request, and to converse with evident satisfaction on the manufactures of Europe, specimens of some of which he had most unwillingly accepted.

Messengers were, in the mean time despatched to five subordinate governors, with orders to assemble their quotas on the morrow for the purpose of hunting. The *tooltoola* resounded through the neighbouring districts to summon young and old; and in imitation of the royal proclamations, the mandate went forth by the herald, "that all who should fail to repair to the wilderness on the day appointed would be held to have forfeited their property during seven years." The son of the host, a tall handsome youth, wearing gay necklaces of beads and a streaming white feather in token of his achievements performed during the recent foray, had been specially charged with the entertainment of our followers;

and the strength of the potent old hydromel, no less than the liberality with which it had been dispensed, were but too evident upon the majority ere the night fell. Loquacity increased with each additional *gumbo* that was drained, and loud and boisterous were the praises of the good cheer within the chieftain's hall.

Amongst the visiters who flocked to behold the white strangers, was a monk from the adjacent monastery, who proved deeply versed in traditionary lore. It was diverting to listen to the arguments adduced by the holy father against the projected hostilities, and one anecdote considerably staggered the faith reposed by the governor in their success. "In ancient days," quoth the recluse, "one of the most powerful monarchs of Æthiopia, whose name I have forgotten, made war against the elephants with his whole army. The king of the elephants being sore pressed, took unto himself a mouse to wife, and herein he displayed his wisdom and sagacity. The mice espousing the quarrel of their noble kin, entered the imperial storehouses in a countless body—devoured all the shields, harness, accoutrements, and leather, in a single night, and thus utterly defeated the project of the king of kings."

The Amhára possess a most indifferent idea of woodcraft, and never venture to attack a wild beast unless on horseback, in bodies consisting of several hundred warriors, armed with every available weapon, when, according to the approved system

of Abyssinian bullying, the animal is sometimes worried to death. But these expeditions are generally undertaken with little success, and seldom terminate without many fatal accidents. He who hurls the first successful spear is entitled to an honorary reward from the king, and to a triumph in the capital, which is attended with ceremonies and rejoicings similar to those that celebrate the return of the murderous foray against the heathen Galla. Owing to the excess of cultivation on the highlands, Shoa generally presents a peculiar deficiency of objects worthy of the chase; baboons and monkeys, it has been seen, are royal game; badgers are believed to be the "Devil's flock," and are therefore studiously shunned; and hyenas, although occasionally destroyed, are in many parts of the country suffered to multiply to an alarming extent, from the existing superstition that Jewish sorcerers descend from the mountains during the night, and transform themselves into the likeness of these animals, whence there could be no good result from their destruction.

Neither journey or hunting is ever undertaken without propitious omens, and should these be wanting, the Amhára will retrace his steps on any pretext, and patiently await the welcome sign. The sight of the unclean hare is sufficient to shake the stoutest nerves. An antelope bounding across the path augurs favourably to success in any undertaking. A fox barking on the left hand destroys all hope of a happy result, but on the right hand a

prosperous issue may with confidence be anticipated. The appearance of a white buzzard prognosticates good or evil according to the position of the tail, and chief of all the numerous birds of ill omen is the "Goorameila."[1] Death or the most dire disaster, is certain to follow his portentous croak; and there is no inhabitant throughout the realm who has not some tale to record in confirmation of the fatal character of this ominous shrike. That foolhardy wight who giveth no heed to the warning note of coming misfortune has never yet been known to escape. He is either balked in the object of his journey, pillaged, maltreated, or murdered.

The omens must in this instance have proved favourable. Under the personal guidance of the host, whose hospitality increased rather than abated, we repaired, on the afternoon of the second day's festivities, to Manya—a village occupying the high promontory of table-land immediately opposite to our former encampment at Zumbo. It overlooked the wide extent of wilderness which was to form the scene of operations on the morrow, but among which it was deemed unsafe to sojourn, as well on account of the wild beasts, as of the constant hostile inroads of the Galla and Adaïel. The route wound by a gradual descent over the Kokfári mountain, so named from the numerous red-legged partridges, the size of a guinea-fowl, with which the coverts

[1] Lanius humeralis. Lath.

swarm—thick copses of brushwood and heather, interlaced with dog-roses, eglantine, and bramble, affording the most alluring shelter in the vicinity of abundant grain and water.

Beneath the moss-grown branches of a silvery "woira," which leaned its venerable form over the hill-side fronting the church dedicated to Emanuel, stood a miniature imitation of the sacred edifice, erected according to wont upon a pile of stones. Bread, grain, rags, and feathers, were industriously heaped upon this idol by every passer by, and the kiss was imprinted with fervent devotion upon the rough stem of the tree around which the old governor, dismounting from his mule, fastened a strip of cloth as a votive offering. On reaching our destination, which by certain of the followers who had sacrificed too liberally to the jolly god was accomplished with no ordinary difficulty, several muskets and match-locks were discharged from the verge of the cliff, to give notice of our arrival to the Gillé and Soopa, two tributary clans, occupying the low country, who, in obedience to the summons of the preceding day, were already assembled on the confines of the hunting ground.

From the Rása hills, the residence of the formidable Anbássa Ali, whose domains bound the wilderness of Giddem, Mount Azulo did not appear to be more than one day's journey; and the Háwash, which is said to flow round its base, could be distinctly traced in its course through the hot Adel

plains, by the dark line of trees that fringe the banks. The mountain itself, although far beyond the dominions of Shoa, is renowned as the most sacred seat of monkery. Continually emitting volumes of dark smoke, its only inhabitants are Christian friars, who, despising the world and its vanities, retire thither, unmolested by Galla or Mohammadan, to spend their days in blissful peace and seclusion. Universally looked upon as sorcerers, they are believed to live on the most social terms with the lions and wild goats which share the retreat, and the tale assigns to the holy fathers an exclusive subsistence upon fruits, and herbs, and roots, which, together with a pair of wings, are freely furnished them from Heaven; but it is certain that none who have yet returned from the pilgrimage have brought back their feathered appendages,—whilst their lank figure and their sunken eye have betokened rather the toil of the weary wayfarer than the high enjoyment of Elysian feasts.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WILDERNESS OF GIDDEM.

Before daylight of the following morning, Ayto Tsanna gave the word to saddle, and the tedious descent of the south-eastern face of the steep Manya hill having been accomplished on foot, we gained the border of the wilderness as the sun rose, and took post on a small eminence to await the report of the scouts who were out in every direction among the tangled grass. The valley, environed by mountains, and extending eight or ten miles in one uninterrupted flat, was intersected throughout its extreme breadth by the four streams already named, their thickly-wooded banks harbouring antelope, and a great variety of birds of the most brilliant plumage. These detached jungles, in many points uniting, formed a continuous belt of dark foliage, and in others receding as the miry swamps became niggard of the requisite moisture, afforded limited vistas to the eye, although still accessible with difficulty either to man or horse.

A speedy summons arrived from the governor, who, with a large party of retainers, and two matchlockmen forming his body-guard, was seated on the banks of Jow-wahá. An elephant had been descried

at the distance of some miles, and an uproar had in consequence commenced, sufficient to alarm the most fearless and sedate quarry in existence. After a protracted and tumultuous consultation, the hunt was commenced according to the Abyssinian method —equestrians and pedestrians without number shouting and hallooing to each other as they threaded the paths trampled by the huge quadrupeds through a tangled swamp of canes, so locked and interlaced that no human eye could penetrate one foot on either side, whilst crowds of Galla horsemen galloped on either flank, to complete the impossibility of success.

This turmoil continued under a burning sun until past two o'clock, when, having reached the extremity of the waste which divides the country of the Gibdósa Adaïel, the appearance of several horsemen hovering in the distance induced the governor to decamp with precipitation to the centre of the wilderness, without having seen aught save a few recent tracks imprinted on the burnt grass, and a charred log of wood which was long maintained to be an elephant. Here the tributary Gillé and Soopa, who had been called out under their respective chiefs, Abbo and Boroo[1], came pouring in from all directions—a wild and savage race, whom the Christians declared to be the most hardened, cruel, and insubordinate wretches in the whole world, men who would take a life for the possession of the veriest

[1] Boroo signifies "my yellow horse."

trifle. More than trebling the numerical strength of the Amhára, their appearance so alarmed the veteran "Wobo," that he forthwith placed himself under the protection of his guests; and apprehending a termination to the day similar to the issue of Chevy Chase, requested that rifles might be discharged for the purpose of intimidation, whilst he ordered his immediate attendants to raise the shrill war-cry to collect his scattered retainers. The Moslems meanwhile contented themselves with gazing at the unwonted appearance of the white strangers, and clumps of Christian spears soon restored the chief to his self-possession, and relieved the forebodings of his dismayed followers, whose extraordinary politeness to the auxiliaries was beyond all things diverting; the most tender inquiries relative to health and well-being only eliciting a scowling glance, accompanied by a surly dogged reply.

It being in the interim reported that a man had been destroyed by a female elephant, at whose calf he had ventured to hurl his spear, Ayto Tsánna took the opportunity of freeing himself of his unpleasant Galla vassals, by directing them to hem the skirts of the forest, whilst he requested us "to enter the thicket, and destroy the enraged beast, whom no one else would approach." Although well convinced of the impossibility of accomplishing this absurd request, a desire to efface former evil imputations induced a ready compliance, and a body of Amhára spearmen were selected to point out the scene of the

alleged accident. Crouching in a compact group at intervals of every few hundred yards as they advanced, they lowered their shields, bristled their spears, and in "the language of the chase," offered up a prayer for Divine assistance, coupled with abuse and defiance to the much-dreaded object of their quest.

The story of the catastrophe proved on investigation to be utterly false, the man having been merely lacerated by a splinter in a fall from a tree, instead of killed outright by an elephant, as averred by his comrades. A search of two miles through the shady recesses of a magnificent forest, where some of the venerable trees measured upwards of forty feet in circumference, and where the lemon grew wild in the utmost luxuriance and profusion, led us again to the open plain, without aught being seen but a few of that rare species of ape styled the "monk of the wood." Here a message from the governor was delivered, to the effect that the elephants were surrounded at the further extremity of the waste, and unless immediately attacked would make their escape. Rejoining him with all expedition, it was ascertained that want of method had again frustrated every design, and that the clamour of the unruly multitude had rendered futile this last chance of retrieving the fortunes of the day.

Evening was now fast closing around, and many miles were to be retraced to the camp, across bogs and quagmires, rendered almost impassable by the

tramp of six hundred horsemen. But before finally leaving the ground, the Galla chieftains and their wild host were assembled; and the governor, taking his seat in the midst, in a set speech informed them that their lord the king had sent them "a strong stranger" as a guest. That their country of Giddem had been chosen in preference to Bulga, Mentshar, or the banks of the Robi, and that elephants *must* be found on the morrow, or shame would be the portion of all in the eyes of their royal master. Bowing their heads, in token of implicit obedience to the high behest, the chiefs pledged themselves to spare no exertions, and to appear early the following day with double the number of their respective tribes; which assurance given, the opportunity was embraced of urging an old dispute relative to the loss of certain Galla steeds, stated by Boroo, surnamed Amba Bukazia, to have been stolen by the Amhára borderers.

"Yellow Horse" rose to speak in favour of his countrymen. His portly figure betokened high command and perfect self-possession. The lines of his dark face had settled down into features expressive of the most imperturbable coolness, and his whole appearance was that of the haughty savage chieftain. Standing erect before his feudal superior, his attitude and demeanour were strikingly bold and dignified. His mantle, surmounted by a shaggy black skin, fell gracefully over his brawny shoulders; and his words flowed on, pleasing and

mellifluous, in a smooth stream of native eloquence, which the soft language of the Galla admitted of his modulating into a masterly succession of measured rhymes The interpreter sat opposite, with his eyes riveted on the orator, and sentence after sentence being rendered into Amháric with ease and volubility, he conveyed to the governor through every marked intonation a close verbal interpretation, without disturbing for a moment the graceful flow of the impassioned harangue. But Ayto Tsánna having already decided the question, and mentally resolved not to listen to the appeal, gladly availed himself of my departure for camp to mount his own horse, and thus abruptly to terminate the unpleasant discussion.

CHAPTER XL.

DOWNFALL OF THE ELEPHANT.

Ere the sun had risen the ensuing morning, we were again in the wilderness, where nearly double the number of Galla had been assembled by the chiefs Boroo and Abbo, to whom, before commencing the labours of the day, suitable trinkets were presented. The swamps on the southern side of the waste having been drawn unsuccessfully, columns of dust which arose from the opposite quarter high above the trees were pronounced to indicate the presence of a troop of elephants; and thither we all hurried. But the performance of the beaters was even inferior to that of the preceding day. Half the number, visibly shaking with fear, ascended the tallest trees, whilst those who had again induced us to precede them through the ocean of tangled flags, where to kill or even to see a wild beast was perfectly out of the question, used their utmost endeavours, by talking and shouting, to give warning of our approach.

But we were resolved to prove that the Gyptzis would not place others in a position which they scrupled themselves to occupy, and the hunt was

continued for some hours with those of the Amhára who possessed sufficient courage to accompany us. The sun was oppressively hot, and our side arms, which were insisted upon as a measure of precaution against the treachery of the allies who had been summoned to assist, proved peculiarly cumbersome and distressing; but swamp after swamp was beaten unsuccessfully, and forest after forest traversed without one glimpse being obtained of the desired quarry.

At length, about two in the afternoon, I was summoned to the presence of the governor, who, being much fatigued, was seated below a spreading tree, and about to propose a return to the tents. In a long studied speech he set forth "that his followers had done *their* utmost also for that day, and had driven the elephants, which were countless as the forest leaves, from place to place, as though they had been village kine, but that the Europeans——" Here his harangue was cut short by the appearance of a Galla scout, who galloped furiously up, exclaiming, "They drink, they drink, in the *Jowwahá!*" The council instantly dissolved. Inspired by a new ray of hope, we leaped again into the saddle, and, carrying our rifles across our shoulders, made at full speed for the river.

A gallop of three miles through a dense covert, consisting of strong elastic wands, interlaced with prickly weeds and coarse spear grass, left the crowd far behind us; and, arriving at the spot where the

animals had been in view, "Yellow Horse," with half a score of his wild riders, was alone present. At the water's edge numerous deep holes in the wet sand were still bubbling from below, and after following the fresh foot-marks a few hundred yards, I ascended a tall tree, from the summit of which, with the aid of my pocket telescope, I presently identified the broad backs of a herd standing at the distance of half a mile. Unconscious of the presence of any foe, they were quietly grouped under a solitary acacia, and but for the flapping of their huge ears, might have been mistaken for masses of rock. Descending as soon as I had thoroughly reconnoitred the land-marks, I made very light of what I had seen, and affecting to doubt the evidence of my eyes, carelessly proposed that the native allies should tarry where they were, whilst Douglas Graham and myself proceeded into the jungle on foot, before the governor with his noisy train should arrive from the rear.

After much fruitless opposition on the part of old Boroo, who saw through the plot, and vowed that his despotic master would hold him responsible for the accident which he considered our rash intention to be certain to involve, my arrangement was finally carried. Armed with two rifles each, we stealthily advanced against the wind, under the cover afforded by the dry copse wood, which yielded up a cloud of impalpable dust, and rendered the inclination to sneeze incessant. I had marked a

scrubby thorn-bush, which served as a beacon, and on climbing silently to the top, we commanded a view of a small open area that had been trampled completely bare. High cane-like wands and withered grass environed it on all sides, and in the centre, beneath the shade of a venerable camel-thorn, whose stem had been well polished by continual rubbing, stood a gigantic bull elephant, surrounded by four of his seraglio.

Thus far we were undiscovered, and British credit being now completely at stake, we paused to take breath, and examine our weapons. Measures having been concerted in a whisper, we then crept upon our hands and knees to the extreme verge of the covert, carefully avoiding the thickest patches, and keeping the tree still always to windward, until, through a beaten track which led towards it, the dark figure of the patriarch of the herd was at last revealed at the distance of only fifteen yards. His trunk was curled around one of his long white tusks; his ears and his under jaw moved at long intervals; and as he swung lazily from side to side to throw his weight on alternate legs, his head was soon turned in the exact position to ensure success. Having first looked at my companion for an assenting nod, I laid my heavy rifle over a forked wooden rest, set the hair-trigger, and planted a two-ounce ball in the only small fatal spot behind the ear which was presented by the monstrous target.

A heavy fall announced the effect of the shot,

and confusion instantly followed. One of the females whose front had been towards our ambush, rushed forward, and received a volley of hard bullets in her broad forehead, which turned the attack, and brought her also to the ground, after a flight with her companions of fifty yards. She, however, rose after some minutes, and rushing past the cavalcade collected on the outskirts, escaped into the thick forest to die, attention being meanwhile entirely engrossed by the tusker, the nobler quarry, who, although prostrate on his side like a fallen tower, manifested in his dying moments, by sundry portentous noises and uncouth struggles, an inclination to resume an erect position. His destruction was speedily completed; but it was still impossible to leave the spot, from a conviction that the braggart Amhára rabble would not fail to claim the honour and the credit of having slain the prize with their powerless spears, should any perchance find the carcass during the absence of the lawful proprietors—a surmise which was fully confirmed by the appropriation of the tail as a trophy, by the very first man who made his appearance.

The death of this lordly monster, to which so little importance would have been attached in those parts of the African continent where the event is one of diurnal occurrence, here created in the mind of every beholder a sensation of astonishment and admiration hardly to be described. The fame of the exploit, carried by express couriers, spread

from corner to corner of the empire; and although far from universally credited, it produced even more than the good effect anticipated. Those who when the storming party first entered the covert, had sought safety in trees, could with difficulty be prevailed upon to descend, in order to approach the mountain of flesh from which life was said to have departed; and finally mustering courage to do so, in the frenzy of excitement, launched their spears and discharged their matchlocks, to the imminent peril of the bystanders and of each other. On the first intimation of the animals having, after two days' diligent search, been actually discovered, three-fourths of the whole party had incontinently disappeared. The Galla horsemen, who had previously boasted the destruction of elephants with their spears, did not venture to approach for a full hour after their ears had been saluted by the reports of our rifles; and even the warrior who vaunted himself the "hereditary chieftain of all the Braves of the Amhára nation," long clung pertinaciously to his secure seat among the topmost branches.

As the fact of the downfall of the noble beast became more widely credited, and the scattered forces gradually rallied round it, chief after chief offered his hand in congratulation of the, in his eyes, daring exploit, expressing his wonder and amazement that a small rifle-ball had been able to accomplish the annihilation of the bulk and life of seventy seasons, and extolling the prowess of

the king's European visiters in the encounter with so formidable a monster, whose colossal strength could have carried him trampling through a whole array of their own host, dealing death and destruction wheresoever his will impelled him. Whilst dancing and howling around the carcass, they affirmed the deed to be the work of genii, and complimented us as the "bravest of the brave," under the titles of "Figa" and "Gobez;" declaring that "the mould whereof the Gyptzis were fashioned must be of a rare quality; and that if all the subjects of Shoa were but composed of the same material, the dominions of Sáhela Selássie would know no limit."

Boroo, the brave chief of the Soopa, who, before our shots were heard, had with extreme difficulty been restrained from gallopihg into the jungle at the head of his gathered retainers, and thus alarming the quarry by the noise and confusion of many hundred horsemen, was more particularly earnest and vehement in his congratulations on our victory. He had himself anticipated none but the most fatal results from what he termed so rash an attack upon the hitherto unsubdued monarch of the wilderness, and had trembled for the royal vengeance which any accident to the party would infallibly have drawn upon his devoted head. "The world was made for you alone," concluded the old warrior in a perfect ecstasy of delight, "and no one else has any business in it."

The trunk and ear of the beast so much dreaded throughout the district having been hewn from the carcass, upon the iron folds of which neither the swords nor the lances of the assembled Galla and Amhára could make the smallest impression, were finally borne off in triumph; and as we returned to the encampment on the hill-top, the same honours were paid us which are exacted by the despot on his triumphal entry after a successful expedition against the heathen. Horsemen galloped in every direction, shouting the prowess of the Gyptzis, and announcing that "those who had gone forth to slay the mighty elephant had successfully performed the quest." Groups of women and girls lined the hill-side, and as the hunting-party crowned the steep, raised their shrill voices in praise and welcome. The tents were entered amid the deafening chorus of a war song. Bullocks were instantly slaughtered for all the followers. Double the daily liberal supplies of every description were poured in. Sprigs of green asparagus were presented by the sons of the delighted governor, to ornament our hair in earnest of victory. Dame Twotit composed a new extemporaneous sonnet upon the occasion, which she rehearsed during half the night; and until the cock crew, every quarter of the village of Manya resounded with wild dancing, martial music, and war songs, in celebration of an achievement, now for the first time witnessed by the Christian population of Shoa.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE NORTHERN GALLA.

GIDDEM was conquered by Asfa Woosen, grandsire to Sáhela Selássie, from Latta, the ruler of the first Mohammadan settlers. A succession of deep valleys, stretching eastward to the very confines of the Adaïel, are occupied by the tributary Galla tribes of Gillé and Soopa, who have become converts to Islamism—the Allála river intersecting the country of the former, of which the principal village is Esgieyé, and the Negéso that of the latter, whose chief resides at Allaiyo. Further to the north, where a continuation of the wild tract of forest land is visible, the Adaïe threads the district inhabited by that portion of the Wollo who own allegiance to Shoa under the government of Efrata, and by the Doogoogra Galla, who were also dependent, but have long been in a state of open rebellion. Large quantities of excellent coffee are cultivated in Manchéttee and Efrata, and with the salt pieces or "ámoles," which it has been seen are imported from Tigré by the Wollo and Worra Káloo, are brought to Shoa by the Moslem merchants. In

Giddem itself, however, coffee is not cultivated, owing to the prejudice entertained respecting its use by the Christian population generally.

Westward of Giddem, and interposed betwixt it and Morabietie, is the province of Mans, largest of all the districts of Shoa, but subdivided into Lálo, Máma, and Ghéra, each of which forms a distinct government. Abiyé, third king of Efát, defeated and subjugated Golé, the then independent ruler, whose daughter Wolensa, was the mother of Zenama Work, the Queen-dowager. This lady, therefore, looks upon Mans as her hereditary possession, and she is much beloved by the people, although, as regards their allegiance to the crown, they still retain a large share of their ancient independence. Haughty, brave, obstinate, and quarrelsome, they openly avow to have little knowledge of Sáhela Selássie—never swear by his name, as is the usage of His Majesty's more dutiful and loyal subjects—often depose the governors whom he appoints to rule over them—and refuse to take part in the annual forays over the southern border, upon the grounds that they have quite sufficient occupation in the adjustment of intestine feuds and boundary disputes. These latter are points not always satisfactorily adjusted in Europe—nor is it extraordinary that they should be attended with some difficulty in Africa.

During the rebellion of Medóko, the king, in his distress, sent an urgent message to the people of

Mans, saying, "My brothers, my relations, hasten to help me!" and pouring in at the summons, the wild hordes arrived in time to decide the issue of the dubious day. But so well aware is the despot of his precarious footing, that he relies entirely upon the tact displayed by his mother, avowing her northern subjects to be his own flesh and blood, upon whom he could not impose a heavy taxation. The only tribute paid, therefore, is in *sekdát*, a coarse black cloth, manufactured of the fleece of the sheep of the country, and invariably employed in the manufacture of the royal tents.

This fabric also furnishes a costume indispensable in so rigorous a climate, where the bleak unsheltered hills, swept by a cutting easterly wind, rank among the coldest portions of Abyssinia. The soil is chiefly a rich black earth, producing abundant crops, but perfectly destitute of timber. Salt is the only circulating medium; and a man's wealth is estimated by the number of his ploughshares, which are carefully buried until wanted. The swarthy complexion of the inhabitants, and their sombre habiliments, distinguish them amongst all the other subjects of Shoa—wearers of the white cotton robe—than whom they are even more superstitious, bigoted, and ignorant; the most enlightened amongst them being esteemed right cunning sorcerers, and as such, dreaded wheresoever they wander.

Mans has already been mentioned as a province famous for the lake Alobár, the reputed residence of

the King of the Genii, through which the river Shai flows to join the Nile. Of yore, when the spot now inundated was *terra firma*, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared in the house of the wealthiest cultivator residing in the many flourishing villages that then existed, and to have addressed herself to the mistress, saying, "I am hungry, and have nothing to eat. Give me corn, and I will grind for wages." A vast heap of grain was pointed out, sufficient for a week's labour, but no sooner had the Virgin touched it than it was miraculously converted into meal. The inhospitable master now refused the pittance claimed; nor would the "Four Chairs," before whom the complaint was carried, give redress, until a poor shepherd had become mediator. As a mark of the displeasure of Heaven, the scene of this offence against the mother of Christ was forthwith converted into a lake, which has since formed the abode of the lord of all the gins and evil spirits in the land; and from that period large quantities of *dabo*, or wheaten cakes, composed of the whitest flour, have been supplied by general contribution to the shepherds on the festival of Debra Tabor, and on the anniversary of "our blessed Lady."

Immediately north of Giddem, betwixt the frontiers of Shoa and Argóbba, is the district of Djbbie, under Abba Munsoor, a Wollo Galla of consequence, formerly governor of Wofagábel, in the territories of Birroo Lubo, and notorious for his personal

valour. Having with a chosen band of followers rebelled some years since against the Prince of Argóbba, he fortified himself at Arikkee, a high table-topped mountain on the Wollo border, where he steadily rejected the terms that were offered for his capitulation. A strong force of spearmen, supported by a thousand musketeers and matchlock-men, was at length sent to reduce the insurgents; but no sooner had the besiegers opened fire from a deep defile that environs the stronghold, than five hundred of their number were laid dead by a storm of stones from above; the residue, as usual on such occasions, retreating in the utmost disorder. The entire scarp of the precipitous hill had been lined with beams and rafters balancing huge masses of rock; and the leathern thongs by which they were lashed being simultaneously cut away by the garrison, destruction was carried along the whole extent of the crowded ravine. After this signal victory, Abba Munsoor abandoned his citadel, and tendering faith to Sáhela Selássie, was placed on the frontier of his former liege, where his valour and trusty services have gained him the highest place in the royal favour.

The dread entertained by the Christians of the independent Moslem denizens of the low country, has been clearly portrayed by the personal confessions of their monarch. The destruction of a single individual of the hostile tribes, by the most treacherous means, is estimated a feat of the greatest valour,

and one that entitles the hero to the highest distinctions. His Majesty's recent allusions to his highland neighbours, the men of Geshe, "who carry broad shields, and fight hand to hand," had reference to the receipt of tidings of the defeat of Ayto Amito, one of his principal frontier governors, by Abogáz Gobassie, a brave chieftain in the service of Birroo Lubo, who, with a large detachment, had attacked and routed the Amhára with great slaughter. This disastrous news had been followed by the arrival of Ayto Kalassie from Kaa, on the west of Antzochia, with intelligence that, being unable any longer to stem the inroads of the Wollo, he had been compelled to take flight, leaving the enemy in possession of a fine district across the river Wonchit, pertaining to the principality of Zenama Work.

These events caused considerable consternation in the kingdom of Shoa; and it being apprehended that the Mohammadans would follow up their success in the direction of Giddem, all the Wollo gunmen in the royal service were discharged, and Christians or converted Galla slaves enlisted in their room. A large detachment of the body-guard was then ordered to the north for the defence of the frontier; but under the conviction that, as on all former occasions, the Amhára cavalry would leave them to dispute the field alone with their brave foes, they proceeded on the service with the greatest possible reluctance, although placed under the immediate command of Chára, the son of Medóko, who is

scarcely less renowned for valour than was his rebel father.

Birroo Lubo, the Prince of Argóbba, is descended from Lubo the son of Watsooba, who is said to have been a weaver, and who espoused the daughter of Endries, governor of Gôf. Amade, the last ruler of Worra Himano, educated Birroo, the fruit of this union, and created him governor of Gôf, whereupon he diligently occupied himself in the extension of his dominions, dividing his residence between that town and Ain Amba. His elder son, Ali Birroo, met an untimely death in one of the many border struggles with the troops of Sáhela Selássie; and the only surviving brother, Amade, who is to succeed his now aged father, has already obtained a great reputation for personal valour in the field. The term Argóbba is applied by the Adaïel to the whole of the border country in which cotton is cultivated. Caravans constantly come from Aussa to Dowwé, on the frontier, the road being far more secure than that between Tajúra and Shoa; and with a view still further to facilitate the communication, the Prince, who is extremely advanced in years, has given one of his daughters in marriage to the chieftain of the united tribes Hurruk Bodaïto.

The next most influential personage on this frontier is Adara Billé, surnamed, from the title of his favourite war-steed, "Abba Daghet," "the Father of Height." This chieftain resides at Gätira[1], in

[1] The Cypress tree.

the district of Changiet, and presides over the Wollo tribe Gora. As a bribe to secure protection to messengers proceeding to the northern states, he has received a number of villages from Sáhela Selássie. Birroo Lubo has given him his daughter in marriage, with territory in his own dominions, and affords military aid in time of need as a check upon the western Galla; and Imám Libán, of the powerful Worra tribe, has likewise made considerable grants of land with a similar object. Thus possessed of extensive power, and courted on all sides, the treacherous chief avails himself of his position to shift the cloak according to the wind; and, although wedded to Birroo's daughter, has never yet assisted that ruler in his hostilities against Shoa.

Although not nominally tributary to Gondar, both Birroo and Adara Billé afford military aid whenever called upon, and the Wollo soldiery form the stoutest bulwark of the decayed empire. Were all these fanatic tribes of one accord, they could not fail to endanger the safety of Christian Abyssinia; but they are fortunately divided throughout by the same feuds and private animosities which sever the southern Pagans. Hating Christian and heathen with all the dire inveteracy enjoined by their creed, and slaying both without mercy on every opportunity, the Wollo preserve all the superstitions of the latter, below whom they are in many respects debased by Mohammadan bigotry; thus affording a melancholy proof of what the whole Galla nation must become,

should it ever unfortunately happen that Abyssinia terminated her intestine struggles by falling under the grasp of a Moslem ruler. Intercourse with the northern states has imparted to the Wollo a higher degree of cultivation than is possessed by their countrymen in the south; and passing nearly the whole of their time in the repetition of prayers, a proverb and general belief prevails, that their country can never be conquered by those who are not followers of the Prophet. This superstition is embraced even by the Christians of Shoa, in consequence of Ras Ali being last year defeated by the Wollo cavalry at Korkora, on his march to invade Efát. The vernacular language of all this border is Galla, adulterated with Amhárić and with the Arabic of the Korán; which two latter may be expected in the course of a few generations entirely to obliterate the aboriginal tongue.

Ali Marie, the independent Mohammadan prince of Tehooláderee, wherein is the lake Haik, has long been in firm alliance with the King of Shoa, and twice ably assisted him against the Wollo, an important piece of service, for which His Majesty remunerated him handsomely. It is now two years since he was defeated by Birroo Lubo, and driven to seek refuge at the Christian court, until, having mustered sufficient reinforcements, he contrived, after several severely-contested battles, to reinstate himself in his government; and it is said of this warrior, that on the occasion of his struggle for

empire, "he slew so many of the foe with his own hand, that the clotted gore could not be effaced from his spear blade."

Again deposed by Birroo, he was now a fugitive in Mofa, a strong fortress to the west of lake Haik. The victor, whose pretext for the war was Ali Marie's refusal to acknowledge allegiance to Ras Ali, has thus, by the subjugation of the Tehoolá-deree Galla, obtained possession of the entire line of road from the frontiers of Shoa to Tigré, and has, moreover, deprived his enemy the Negoos of his staunchest and most powerful ally. It is not a little singular, that Sáhela Selássie, who is on outward terms of friendship with Ras Ali, should have been suffered to afford an asylum to Ali Marie, without being called to account. On the occasion in question, the haughty but humbled fugitive bared his shoulders to the Christian monarch, according to the Abyssinian mode of evincing respect, remarking, as he did so, "that he gave this token of deference for the first time during his life."

The Túlema Galla are the last to be mentioned on the northern frontier of Shoa, and at their hands the most serious disasters and reverses have uniformly been experienced. A former emperor of Æthiopia is said to have married a female slave, by whom he had three children, Metcha, Karaiyo, and Túlema. These youths were charged with the royal herds, and being in the wilderness, and brave young men, they soon drew around them a number of discontented

vagabonds, who embraced their language and manners, which were those of their mother, a native of the very centre of Africa. Concerting an attack upon the southern provinces of the empire beyond the Háwash, they defeated the imperial army on the banks of the river Gála in Gurágué, which runs south towards Zingero; but of numerous clans and houses into which the rebels became subsequently divided, the twelve tribes of Metcha, the Karaiyo, and the Túlema, have alone retained their aboriginal appellation.

Attempting to invade the territory of the Abitchu and Ghelán, the Túlema were defeated and driven to the north-west, where they established themselves on the bleakest and most lofty highlands, and to the present day have maintained their independence. One portion have become converts to the Mohammadan faith, but the occupants of the mountain Déra adhere to idolatry. Woosen Suggud succeeded in subjugating some few of these tribes; but on the accession of Sáhela Selássie, they cast off the yoke, and being joined by a member of the blood-royal of Shoa, became formidable enemies. Force after force has been sent against Kalála, the capital, on the borders of Morabeitie, and always with the same result. Birroo-Bukiza, and his successor, the brave Abba Damto, have invariably repulsed the "soldiers of the cross," with fearful slaughter, and many governors have been put to a cruel death. In the mind of the superstitious Amhára, fear has gradually

given birth to a belief of the existence in these cold mountains of a race of fabulous beings called *Arita*, to whom their reverses are attributed. The lower portion of the body is described to be that of an ass or a black dog, whilst the head and shoulders assume the human form, and with the gait, costume, and language of mankind, complete a disguise which enables the monsters to roam undetected over the border districts of Shoa, in prosecution of their bloody career of cannibalism.

CHAPTER XLII.

THERMAL WELLS AT FEELÁMBA.

The day following our victory over the monarch of the forest was passed in the laborious operation of hewing out the ponderous tusks, each of which formed the load of a donkey, and was valued at one hundred German crowns. A strong force was in attendance to keep the peace; and owing to the inferiority of the tools at command, and the existing necessity of cutting completely through the head to the root of the lower tusk, which was half-buried in the soil with the violence of the fall, the trophies were not borne off until the sun had set. The wounded man had meanwhile been conveyed to the camp for surgical aid. The edges of the laceration in his thigh had been by an amateur practitioner neatly brought together with acacia thorns fastened by threads of wiry grass; and a handful of silver easily reconciled the patient to a few weeks of confinement to his bed.

An Armenian, acting in capacity of dragoman to the Embassy, had been the Æsculapius—a man who, without the smallest pretensions, gratuitously set up also to be a first-rate Nimrod; and the mer-

riment made throughout this day at his expense had covered him with confusion. When setting out from Ankóber with a borrowed musket, he had rubbed his hands and feigned the highest spirits at the prospect of resuming his "old sport," for he had slain elephants by the dozen in Northern Abyssinia; and their tails, he contended, "like the tails of all elephants, were not tufted at the extremity, as I asserted, but covered with long hair, after the fashion of the horse!" A mouse wandering from an adjacent granary at Dokáket, and unwisely scampering over his bed, fell a sacrifice to the well-aimed staff of the hero, who, by virtue of this brilliant exploit, stuck a white feather in his hair, and whooped the war-song during half the ensuing march.

Nevertheless, in the course of the first day's unsuccessful hunting, he had been seen to hide himself in a manner far from creditable to his nerves; he had been heard to exert his voice in earnest supplications for assistance at the rumoured approach of the animal for whose life he had previously affected to thirst; and when at last actually confronted with the defunct monster, he was fain to confess that he had only once beheld a live elephant "from the summit of a very high tree, when he discharged his matchlock as the beast retreated, and the people declared that it would die."

This curious confession on the part of the impostor, whose statements had heretofore been credited, led to further disclosures. He had been addicted

to shooting at hyenas by night in the suburbs of Adowa; and having once been so fortunate as to overturn the object at which he fired, he flew enraptured to the spot, and was somewhat disagreeably surprised to find a Christian man weltering in blood, which flowed from a perforation through the heart. For this untoward murder he was sentenced to pay two hundred pieces of salt, by Oubié the usurper, who, however fond of putting his own subjects to death, permitted no one else to do so with impunity; and being unable to raise the amount of this fine among his numerous friends, he wisely adopted the alternative of flight.

In Shoa he set up as a physician, and practised medicine, until so many patients died under his hands, that the king was compelled to issue an interdiction. It formed the veteran's boast, that although well stricken in years, he could still bolt ten pounds of raw beef at one sitting, whereas, if subjected to a culinary process, three were more than he could contrive with comfort. Notwithstanding all his exaggerations, he had witnessed strange sights, which are but too well corroborated. He had seen the monster Oubié, when his conscience was stained by fewer foul crimes than it now is, put out the eyes of his elder brother, who, as the searing-iron hissed over the unflinching orbs, thanked God that he had so long been spared the use of them; and he had seen Ras Subagadis, under whom he once held a petty government in Tigré,

executed by the hands of a pagan Galla, who undertook the task for some bread and a barillé of hydromel, after numerous Amhára had refused to become headsman to so humane a prince.

Every object in visiting Giddem having been fully and satisfactorily accomplished, we bade adieu to the hospitable old governor, whose parting request was, that he might be favourably mentioned to his royal master. This I unhesitatingly promised; and Ayto Elbeshár was deputed to lead the way to the celebrated thermal springs of Feelámba, situated within his government, and which I had determined to visit as we returned to Ankóber. Descending by an extremely steep footpath to a deep dell below the Aito hill, the road wound above a mile along the sunken channel of the narrow river, through which meandered a rippling brook of crystal water, varied at intervals by miniature cascades, and shaded throughout its tortuous course by trees and flowering creepers of luxuriant beauty. In an angle formed by a sudden bend are the hot wells, five in number, rising at some distance from each other—the remnants of old volcanic action, which has long entirely disappeared in other parts of its theatre, but has left behind it, in this secluded and highly picturesque spot, a salubrious fountain of life.

Aragáwi, the most celebrated of these springs, derives its name from one of the nine missionaries of the Greek church, who, at the close of the fifth

century, completed the conversion of Abyssinia during the reign of Alámeda. He is styled also Za Michael; and is said to have been conveyed on the tail of a huge serpent to the summit of the lofty and then inaccessible rock on Debra Dámo, where he founded a convent, of which he is the tutelar saint, and which is still one of the most renowned in Æthiopia. It is recorded of Aragáwi that he raised the dead, and caused the blind to see; and among the manifold notable miracles ascribed to him, the not least remarkable is the conversion to Christianity of the Devil himself, whom he persuaded to take the monastic cap for forty years!

Selássie, the Holy Trinity, is another open pool or basin situated close to Aragáwi, and like it rising in bubbles from the sandy bank and bed of the stream. In both the temperature stood at 118° of Fahrenheit. Mariam, the blessed Virgin, at 115°, issues from a cave, provided with a rude door, and partitioned by a bar of wood into two cells for new and old complaints, and in these patients were in the act of immersion. Abbo, at 120°, percolates from the centre of a steep bank of soft red sandstone, covering basaltic wacke, through an artificial spout inserted for the convenience of drinking the waters. Numbers of dreadfully diseased wretches, the lame, the halt, and the blind, who were here assembled, with victims who had suffered under the Galla knife, formed a horrible spectacle, which

called vividly to mind the scriptural account of the pool of Bethesda.

The superintendence of the numerous patients who thus flock hither to undergo the discipline of the baths, is limited to the collection of one piece of salt, value two-pence halfpenny sterling, for the use of the wells, which are believed to possess the highest sanative virtues in a great variety of disorders. The waters possess a slight taste and smell of sulphuretted hydrogen; but they may be drunk hot from the spring without creating nausea. There is no precipitate whatever; and not five yards from their source they mingle with a strong current of cold pure mountain water, to which no perceptible alteration is imparted in colour, temperature, or taste.

Here we obtained many rare and beautiful birds; amongst others, the Adagoota, a superb black-crested falcon, which had been first seen in the wilderness of Giddem. Following the course of the Feelámba to its junction with the Jow-wahá, whereof it forms the principal source, the main road was gained at no great distance from the ford, and the steep Gozi range again surmounted to the village of Telim Amba. It is situated on a height divided by a deep valley from the opposite residence of the governor of Mahhfood, whose lady presently sent me, through a slave girl, the expression of her regret, that "the king's guests" should have chosen to halt at so great a distance; and although

it exceeded four miles, she finally insisted upon supplying us with a huge pepper pie, and other ready-cooked provisions. "You might eat these," was the message delivered by the Abigail: "they were prepared for you, but you have taken another road."

On the banks of the Robi we had again met Ayto Abaiyo, superintending operations at one of the royal threshing-floors, where all the inhabitants of the district were assembled; and self-interested motives induced him very uncivilly to oppose a day's hunting on that river, upon the score of alleged hostilities with Anbássa Ali. In order to free himself from any further importunity, he clandestinely instructed our guide to lead us by the most direct route, and hence arose the offence which I had committed against the "*Emabiet*."

CHAPTER XLIII.

RETURN TO ANKÓBER.

An extremely steep and infamous road, intersected by numerous mountain torrents, brought us the following day to Arámba. After crossing the district of Arraba Amba, which pays tribute to the crown in agates, whereof numbers of the form adapted for gun-flints are picked up on the face of the soil, the path wound above three miles along the channel of the river Shonkorghie, or "Sugar-sides," which takes its source in the Turmáber range, and during the rains becomes quite impassable. On its borders the blackberry and the corinda abounded, both in full fruit. The scenery was especially beautiful; and in a romantic glen, partially secluded by a grove of tall trees, among which the green and crimson "zoreet" displayed its gorgeous plumage, stood the picturesque church and monastery of "Our Lady."

Arámba was taken from the Areeo Galla by Abiyé, third monarch of Shoa; and now containing a large portion of the treasures amassed by Sáhela Selássie and his ancestors, is garrisoned by a strong detachment of gunmen, and entrusted to the cus-

tody of a governor, and of a Shálaka, or captain of a thousand. No stranger is permitted to enter the village without first giving the personal security of one of the inhabitants; and access is not under any circumstances allowed to the stronghold, which occupies the apex of a rocky ridge, possessing great natural strength. Here, in a succession of long barn-like buildings, are consigned to mould and cobwebs, and jealously guarded, every civilized invention received by the despot, which could in any way tend to the advancement or improvement of his people.

Our camp was formed on a small level terrace, of which the precipitous brink overlooked a deep dark valley containing the sources of the Arámba water, each flowing through a narrow rocky ravine. Extensively cultivated, and echoing to the shrill voice of the partridge, it is studded with cottages, above the white roofs of which the wreaths of curling smoke rose in agreeable relief against the sombre side of the wood-clothed mountain that bounded the prospect. Wóti, towering amid dense forests of timber, and appearing to bear on its venerable summit the crumbling ruins of a giant castle, shut in the view on one side, whilst on the other, far beyond a remarkable pyramidical hill called Koka, could be traced the jungly banks of the Awádee, gradually fading into the blue perspective of the Adel desert.

We experienced every civility at the hands of

the governor and Shálaka; the latter of whom insisted on mounting guard over our tents in a small temporary bower erected as a defence against the nocturnal cold. Supplies of every description were furnished in regal profusion; and the voracity of the Abyssinian followers, to whom the excursion had proved one continued feast, was most severely put to the test. The king's orders, which, in consequence of the excessive cheapness of all the necessaries of life, entail small burden upon the host, threw open the doors at every stage, and afforded the most lavish commissariat; and although the donors in most instances refused our money, they yet accepted presents of tenfold value in their estimation, which amply remunerated them for the tax imposed by the despotic Negoos.

But different indeed would be the reception afforded to the man who should venture to wander through the country without the royal assistance. A well-stocked purse, or a well-filled portmanteau, would not invariably produce a salutary effect, since the savage has always some plan in contrivance, by which to obtain possession of any curious article exposed to his admiring gaze, without imparting aught of value in return; and in Shoa a display of force is frequently requisite to extort that for which the most liberal payment has previously been tendered. Coupled with the desire to obtain property, there ever exists an innate disinclination to part with the most trifling commodity; and even among

the higher classes, a stick or a spear is sometimes peremptorily refused to parties who have previously loaded the ingrate with the richest imaginable presents.

Our last march lay over the mountain mass of which Mamrat forms the main feature. The ascent in many parts is extremely tedious; and deep dells, intersecting the road, are traversed each by a clear streamlet, leaping from rock to rock in its downward course to vales far concealed from view. A singular bird's-eye view of Góncho, the state prison, was obtained from a natural terrace on which, environed by dark juniper trees, stands the church of Kidána Meherát, "the Covenant of Mercy." This very common title is due to an opinion entertained by the Abyssinian fathers, that God appeared to the Virgin Mary in Paradise, and formed a covenant with her for the redemption of mankind.

The voice of the mourners was soon after heard at the house of Ayto Manór, late governor of the district, who, to the great concern of the king, had recently departed this life. In boyhood a playfellow of Sáhela Selássie, the young prince had sworn that, on his accession to the throne, he would not forget him, and throughout his long reign he had proved true to his word. Although the deceased had, by his disputes with the merchants of Hurrur, forfeited the government of Alio Amba, the most lucrative in the realm, he was immediately invested with another. Year after year, too, honours and wealth

had been heaped upon him from the throne, in gratitude for which he willed to his liberal master the entire of his accumulated property, without making any provision for his own children, who, in the ordinary course of things, are permitted to reside twelve months on the father's estate before it reverts to the crown.

A great portion of the latter part of the road lay through the mighty forests of Mamrat, of which the scenery was rendered singularly beautiful by the admixture of vernal and autumnal tints; produced at this season by the great proportion of evergreens. The shadowy and sombre juniper, fashioned like the tall cedars of Lebanon, and the fresh and lively "zigba,"

> "So massy, vast, yet green in her old age,"

wave stage above stage from the gloomy depths of the valley, to the very pinnacle of the mountain, amid the moss-grown forms of the silver-haired "woira." The imperial purple lory, with myriads of brilliant birds, darted through the cool recesses; the bell voice of the campanero tolled with monotonous regularity, and many a clear and sparkling rivulet bounded over its broken channel.

Deep-seated in this retirement lies the monastery of Mántek, said to have been founded a thousand years. It is inhabited solely by *Tabeeban*—men strongly suspected of being Jews in disguise—cunning workers in iron, wood, and clay,

who are regarded as sorcerers, and shunned accordingly by all save the king, to whom they are endeared. The austerities practised by this fraternity, "in order to obtain righteousness before God," are perhaps as severe as any recorded in monkish annals. An oath is taken, under a curse, never to look at a female, nor to hear her voice, nor to eat a morsel of bread which has been prepared by woman's hands, and excommunication for twenty years is the penalty attached to the infringement of the vow. No fire is kindled either on Saturday or on the Sabbath; the most meagre diet is observed throughout the residue of the week; many sit up to their necks in water for days together: at appointed periods all lash their naked bodies with rods of sharp thorns; and whilst every brother sleeps in a sitting posture upon a hard clay bench, with his loins girt about by a tough cord, the *Alaka*, their superior, does penance continually in a massive iron chain.

A tree, which points to the monastery of Aferbeine, was adorned by the followers as they passed with the variegated feathers of the *zoreet*, and with fragments detached from their soiled cotton garments. The portals of this convent are guarded by a blind dwarf, two feet four inches in stature, who never moves from his post save on men's shoulders. Among the unwashed tenants of the cloister, there was one who did not disdain to stroll forth, that he might greet the triumphant Gyptzis.

Father Stephános was perhaps the least bigoted of his profession, but he possessed his full share of ignorance and superstition. Leviathan he believed to be a monstrous serpent, carrying the world on its back. None possessed firmer faith in the winged chariot of Æthiopia, in which the celestial ark of the covenant is recorded to have been brought from the Holy Temple; and he further laboured under the happy delusion, that a fire kindled above his secluded convent, must, *par excellence*, be fully as conspicuous at Jerusalem, as the beacons in Palestine by which St. Helena announced at Constantinople her discovery of the Cross!

Old Osmán, too, with the aid of his ivory-headed crutch, limped forth from his cell in the outskirts of Ankóber, to inquire how his white friends "from beyond the world of waters had entered and passed their time?"—A rover in Gurágué, he had dealt largely in human flesh, and seen much of the unexplored interior, but finally followed the example of Habakkuk, the Arabian merchant, who, in the days of Tekla Haïmanót the ecclesiastic, and during the reign of King Naod, was brought to embrace Christianity, and became *Etchegué*, or Superior of all the monasteries. A proselyte to the religion of Æthiopia, Osmán had renounced the false prophet, and put away every Mohammadan abomination, coffee only excepted. Without the sober berry, he averred life to be a very burden; and the clergy were fain to close their eyes upon the mal-

practices of one, whose geographical information, united with great abilities as a spy, had exalted him to the highest place in the royal favour.

A frequent visiter at the residency, the garrulous monk had opposed strenuous arguments to my projected war against the elephants, herds of which he represented to be so numerous around the lake Zooai, that caravans are afraid to traverse the dense forest unless provided with a number of young goats, to whose bleat the colossus entertains an unconquerable antipathy. "Take my kid with you," he advised: "on no account omit this, or the monsters will assuredly trample you." He had been reminded that "the battle is not always to the strong," but he invariably shook his head; and even now that the chorus of victory was ringing in his ears, and the tail of the fallen actually in his hand, he continued at intervals to ejaculate, with upturned eyes, "No; I like it not."—"By Mary! it doth not please me."

In the environs of the capital a vast concourse of people had assembled to welcome our safe return from the hunting-field; and as the ivory trophies of the chase were borne through the crowd upon the shoulders of six men, great were the demonstrations of astonishment and commendation evinced at the successful issue of an expedition so universally ridiculed at its departure. Women and girls shouted in the market-place. Visits of congratulation were forthwith paid by all our friends and well-wishers; whilst the few who had spread disparaging reports,

and who still continued to dislike the presence of the British in Abyssinia, evinced by their silence the envy and jealousy to which the unprecedented exploit had given birth in their breasts. Amongst those who felt more particularly annoyed and chagrined was Sertie Wold, the Purveyor General, who had not long before hunted the wilderness of Giddem for two successive months, with a retinue of more than three thousand spearmen and many fusileers, and who had during that period enjoyed very superior opportunities to ourselves, without however being able to achieve the object of his highest ambition—the death of an elephant.

CHAPTER XLIV.

HONORARY DISTINCTIONS.

The court had meanwhile removed to Angollála; but a paternal letter from the royal pen awaited the return of the Embassy to the capital. "Are my children well?—have they entered in safety? I have heard with joy of your success. Horsemen were dispatched, and they brought me the glad tidings that you had killed. Hasten hither, that I may confer upon you the reward due unto those who have slain forty Galla in the battle."

No time was lost in accepting this invitation, and a guard of honour met us on the road. Together with sheep and oxen from the king, and barillés of hydromel from the queen, visits of congratulation were received from all the principal courtiers present. Amongst others, came Ayto Egázoo, whose hospitality had been extended to us on our way to Giddem; and Ayto Zowdoo[1], formerly governor of the important province of Geshe on the northern frontier, who was dismissed for bravely fighting against the Worra Káloo, on the occasion when the son of Birroo Lubo fell—an event which, although highly gratifying to His Majesty, policy had in-

[1] i. e. My crown.

duced him to punish by the imprisonment and disgrace of all the principal Amhára engaged. Both of these visiters had, with sorrowful hearts, taken leave of us on our departure; and they now repeated the inward conviction entertained, that the animals against which rash war was to be waged, would have "consumed the assailants"—a persuasion which had led them to cherish not the smallest hope of seeing any one of us again. But greater than all was the delight of the chief smith, when he gave his assurance, after a careful admeasurement, that the circumference of the ivory trophies then lying in the tent for presentation to his royal master, yielded two full spans in excess of any tusk in the royal magazines.

A band of fusileers were at dawn the ensuing morning directed to escort us to the presence; and whilst ascending the hill through the various courtyards, they chanted the war chorus of death before the spoils of the vanquished elephant. A successful expedition against the Loomi Galla having recently returned, the walls of the reception-hall were decorated with numerous trophies hanging above scrolls of parchment closely written with blessings from the priesthood. But the whole court was in deep mourning, in consequence of the demise of Ayto Baimoot, the chief eunuch, who was nurse to the king in infancy, and had been through after-life his principal adviser. Heads were close shaven, temples scarified; and those immediately

about the royal person were clothed in sackcloth and ashes.

"Your joy is my joy," exclaimed His Majesty, so soon as the usual salutations had been concluded, "and I am delighted when my children are happy. I feared that the elephants would destroy you; but you have achieved a triumph which none other have accomplished during the reign of Sáhela Selássie."

The ivory was now laid at the feet of the king, who listened with great interest and seeming astonishment to the detail of our proceedings, and to the assurance that the monarch of the forest might always be vanquished by a single bullet, if properly directed. A long confession of the personal dread entertained of the elephant by His Majesty was followed by an anecdote formerly touched upon at Machal-wans, of his own discomfiture, and that of his entire host, by a herd encountered during a foray against the Metcha Galla, when, being firmly convinced that the army would be destroyed, he had deemed it prudent to retreat with all expedition. "I ran," he repeated several times with emphasis—"I ran, and every one of my followers did the same. You evidently understand the mode of dealing with these monsters; but if ten thousand of my people ventured to oppose a troop, the elephants would consume them all."

After this candid avowal on the part of the despot, I took the opportunity of intimating that a

strong desire had been entertained to bring from Giddem the spoils also of a wild buffalo, but that Ayto Tsánna declared to me that His Majesty, during an expedition made some years previously, had fairly exterminated the species.

"*Oonut now*," "that is true," he replied, "and you must not attempt to kill the 'Gosh,' for it is a most ferocious and dangerous beast. What answer should I give if my children were to be demolished by buffaloes in the kingdom of Shoa? They consume men and horses. When I slew a buffalo in Giddem, there were ten men and ten horses destroyed. They reside in the thickets where they cannot be seen; and putting their heads to the ground, annihilate all who approach their lair. As soon as they have killed a horse, we close round them in vast numbers, and overwhelm them with spears and guns; but you are few, and cannot attempt this."

As this paternal remonstrance might be traced to a desire on the part of the monarch to place his own exploit in a superior point of view, I changed the subject by an assurance of the uniform kindness and hospitality that we had experienced on the road, at the hands of Ayto Tsánna, and at those of the Emabiet in Mahhfood more especially; and each pause was followed by an ejaculation from the royal lips: "Did I not command him? Is not Birkenich my daughter?"

Certain rewards and immunities are in Shoa attached to the destruction of enemies of the state,

and of formidable wild beasts, which are regulated according to a fixed scale, and never withheld. These His Majesty now signified his intention of conferring; and one of the ministers of the crown entering the hall, accordingly proceeded, by the royal command, to invest the victors with the decorations due to the downfall of an elephant.

"You have each slain forty Galla," repeated the king, "and are henceforth entitled to wear upon the right arm this *bitówa*, or silver gauntlet, surmounted by this *choofa*, or silver bracelet; and on the left shoulder the spoils of a he lion, in token of your prowess, that it may be manifest unto all men."

His Majesty then with his own hand presented newly-plucked sprigs of wild asparagus, to be worn in the hair during forty days, and to be replaced at the expiration of that period by the *erkoom* feather. Thus honoured, we took our way down through the court-yards of the palace, a band of warriors again preceding, who discharged their muskets at intervals, whilst they chanted the Amhára war chorus, and danced the death triumph.

The rebellion of the Loomi, which had now with infinite difficulty been quelled, affords an excellent commentary upon the nature of Sáhela Selássie's Galla tenures. A portion of this tribe had failed to pay their tribute to the now disgraced governor of Mentshar, who was wounded in the attempt to levy it, and the royal forces took the field against them. Bótha, who presided over a portion of the Yerrur

district, was also a defaulter, though not in open revolt; but at the entreaty of his brother Dogmo, a faithful vassal of the king, he came in with his arrears as the army drew nigh; and having been mildly reproached for the delay, was dismissed with pardon. No sooner, however, had he left the camp, than he went over to the Galla on the plain of the Háwash, and aided the Loomi in a projected attack upon the Amhára. Upon this defection, Shambo, his elder brother, became apprehensive of consequences; for he conceived it by no means improbable that he might be held responsible for an offence in which he had no participation, as in the case of Súmmad Negoos, late governor of Geshe, who is to this day a state prisoner in consequence of his brother Negooso going over to the ruler of Argobba. He therefore determined to renounce his allegiance, but deferred the execution of his design until after joining Ayto Shishigo, who commanded the troops acting against the Loomi; and it being then proposed to burn a village on the summit of an adjacent hill, belonging to the tribe of Bótha, he immediately took part with the enemy, and heading an onset in person, slew a vast number of the Christians.

One half of the Loomi hamlets were already in flames, but the work of destruction was now discontinued; and the royal forces retreating in disorder, were again attacked by the rebel brothers, and defeated with great loss within sight of the camp at Cholie. Perceiving his warriors flying in

all directions, the king seized spear and shield, and commanded his steed to be saddled, to the end that he might take the field in person. But a wily monk, believing that His Majesty felt no real anxiety to place himself in a position of such imminent peril, threatened him with excommunication if he stirred, and thus the day was irretrievably lost.

Háwash Oosha[1], who governs the subjugated sections of the Aroosi, Soddo, Liban, and Jillé tribes, having meanwhile joined the insurgents, the whole Galla border was in arms. This powerful chieftain, who was for many years the open enemy of the despot, had been finally gained over to the royal interest by large presents, and by the espousal of his daughter; since which period he has held, in nominal subjection to the crown, an important portion of the plain of the Háwash. He soon repented him of the part he had taken in the present insurrection; and the usual dissensions arising among the rebels, a deputation, assured of personal safety, fell on the ground before the footstool of the throne with overtures of future fealty. But the country was rich in flocks and herds; and under the peculiar circumstances of aggravation attending the revolt, the delegates were commanded to arise, and to return whence they came, with an assurance to the contrite rebel that his fair plains were shortly to be the scene of pillage and desolation.

[1] i. e. "The dog of the Háwash."

Two successful inroads followed close upon this threat, and ample vengeance was taken. The wealth of the Pagans was transferred to the royal meadows. Women wrung their hands in captivity, and a black and burning monument attested the lava-like course of the chastising hordes. The season of retribution again drew nigh, and Shambo and Bótha trembled at the fate that awaited them. The powerful intercession of the church was sought with bribes, and obtained. A hooded monk from the cloisters of Affaf Woira stood before the throne with a peace-offering from those who supplicated pardon, and clemency was graciously extended.

As the Embassy entered the palace-court at the royal invitation, the traitors were perceived prostrate on their faces, heaping dust upon their heads in token of abject humiliation. The fear of the heavy fetters of Góncho was before their eyes; and the half inebriated state gaoler scowled at them like a basilisk from the ladder of the balcony. But for once he was cheated of his prey. Five hundred head of choice black cattle, which the caitiffs had treacherously swept from those whose cause they so lately espoused, were accepted as the price of pardon; and with an eloquent harangue from the throne, setting forth the duties of a liege subject, Shambo and Bótha were dismissed in peace.

CHAPTER XLV.

CONCLUSION OF A TREATY OF COMMERCE.

Angollála continued bitterly cold throughout the month of December; and fires, although not quite indispensable, were always found pleasant enough. A dry cutting wind from the eastward blew throughout the day; but the clouds, which often gathered over the surrounding mountains, occasionally disturbed the serenity of the afternoon with a squall of hail. Snipe abounded among the serpentine streams which intersected the environs of the palace-hill; and the hero who possessed courage to cast off the blankets before the sun rose, invariably saw the hoar-frost lying white over the faded meadows. Dogs continued to howl in packs, and mendicants to importune as of yore. Dirty pages and troublesome idlers still infested my tent; and the approaches were choked by numerous bands of Yedjow Galla, who were begging their way to the country of Dedjasmach Fáris. Day and night their monotonous voices arose from every quarter of the town, and Christian adjurations by "Miriam" and "Kedoos Michael"

were often nearly drowned by the choral hymn uplifted to Allah and the false prophet.

A new invoice of beads, cutlery, trinkets, *ghemdjia*, and other "pleasing things," had been received from the coast; and visits were therefore unusually frequent on the part of all who loved to be decorated. Abba Mooálle, surnamed "the Great Beggar in the West," with his adopted brother, appeared to hold the lease of the tent in perpetuity; and in return for amber necklaces and gay chintz vestments, hourly volunteered some promise, simply, it would seem, that they might afterwards enjoy the pleasure of forfeiting a gratuitous oath. If solemn asseverations by highly respectable saints and martyrs, were to be received with credit, messengers were almost daily despatched, and on fleet horses too, for the purpose of bringing from the Galla dependencies on the Nile, amongst other treasures, the spoils of the *gásseia*, a black leopard, elsewhere not procurable, and "worn only by the governors of provinces." But by some unaccountable fatality, not one of these fleet couriers ever found his way back to the English camp at Angollála; and the cry meanwhile continued, without intermission,—"Show me pleasing things; give me delighting things; adorn me from head to foot."

Nor were there wanting other standing dishes of an equally rapacious and insatiable character, and scarcely more addicted to veracity. Gádeloo, "the hen-pecked," was punctual in his attendance, by

order of the Emabiet of Mahhfood, who had always a new want to be supplied. "May they buy," with an unsound steed for sale at an unconscionable price, brought daily an urgent request of some sort from his spouse. Neither did any morning pass without a protracted visit from Shunkoor, "Sugar," own brother to the queen, escorted by Ayto Dedjen, "Doors," his shadow and boon companion, and grand-nephew to the monarch himself. But the attachment subsisting between these inseparable allies was one day suddenly dissolved over a decanter of unusually potent hydromel, and a sabre-cut on the head of either, demonstrated, alas! the fleeting and unstable nature of all sublunary friendship.

As each evening closed, the nobility were to be seen streaming towards our tents from the royal banquet, supported upon their ambling mules by a host of armed and not very sober retainers; and a tribe of ragged pages bringing messages from the palace, accidentally entered at the same time to report the substance of the conversation, although many of the illustrious visiters were absolutely inarticulate. Lances were hurled at a target to the imminent peril of all spectators; and the neck of the vanquished having been duly trampled under foot, according to the ancient Oriental form of military triumph, all who anticipated any difficulty in reaching their own abodes, staggered back to the Gyptzis to laugh at the mad pranks of Dághie, the

obsequious court buffoon, and the flower of Abyssinian minstrelsy.

Decked by the favour of the monarch in a shining silver sword, this Merry Andrew, fiddle in hand, came scraping and chanting his way homeward, with eyes sufficiently inflamed to indicate where he had been dining. Kissing the earth as he took his seat in the tent, amid many antics, grimaces, and inquiries, he proceeded to elicit from his instrument imitations of the human voice under various intonations of joy, surprise, and sorrow; and a host of retainers, crowding round the doors with shoulders bared, next shouted their approval to some travestie of the wild Adel slogan, or joined their voices in full chorus to swell the Amhára death triumph, or this, the pibroch of the Nile:—

"The sword is burning for the fight,
And gleams like rays of living light;
Let thoughts of fear inthral the slave—
Rouse to the strife, ye Gojam brave.

"Clustering they come, the Turkish rout
Ring back on high the Amhára shout;
For honour, home, or glorious grave—
Rouse to the strife, ye Gojam brave.

"The sword of Confu leads the war,
And dastard spirits quail afar;
None here to pity, none to save—
Rouse to the strife, ye Gojam brave.

"Our swords in tint shall soon outvie
Yon scabbard of the crimson dye,
And overhead shall ruddy wave—
Rouse to the strife, ye Gojam brave.

"Red as their belts their blood shall flow,
Deep as the hue of sunset glow;
Mercy to none who mercy crave—
Rouse to the strife, ye Gojam brave."

Pages and abigails were hourly in attendance, on the part of their royal master or mistress, with some rubbish from the palace, which was carefully removed from its red and yellow basket of Gurágué grass, divested of all its numerous wrappers, and confidentially exhibited with an inquiry, *sotto voce*, "whether more of the same description was not to be obtained?" The outcry raised for detonating caps was wearisome and incessant; for although it was notorious that the royal magazines boasted a hoard sufficient to answer the utmost demand of at least three generations, the king was ever apprehensive of bankruptcy, in event of a quarrel with the Adaïel, "because his own people knew not the road beyond the world of waters." Thus it happened that Kidána Wold, "the long gunman," who had charge of the royal armoury, received private instructions to look in at the Residency at least twice a week, with a *mamálacha* for fifty or a hundred *tezábs*, and regularly once a month averred that he had been so unfortunate as to drop from his girdle another box of His Majesty's patent anti-corrosives—a loss which, unless timely repaired, must inevitably result in the forfeiture of his liberty. "The *Gaita* has discovered my carelessness," he would add, with tears in his eyes; "and, by Mary,

if you don't help me immediately, I shall be sent to Góncho." Treble strong canister gunpowder was also in high demand, its superiority over the manufacture of Shoa being admitted even by the maker. But the sulphur monopoly remained as heretofore most jealously guarded. The ill-starred individual who had charge of the mines on the frontier, in an evil hour accepted silver for a lump of the purified commodity, which was required for the cure of applicants having the beggar's disease; and spies reporting the peculation, the delinquent was condemned to perpetual labour in the hot valleys of Giddem.

This convict was accompanied in his exile by a shrewd lad, who had been detected at the Bool Worki market in giving circulation to two counterfeit dollars. Weeks of incessant toil had enabled him to produce out of a lump of pewter, very creditable imitations of the coinage of Maria Theresa. Every spot and letter had been most closely represented with a punch and file; and the ingenious artist, naturally enough, seemed vastly mortified at the untoward consequences of his labour. "Tell me," inquired the king, as the culprit was being removed, "how is that machine made which in your country pours out the silver crowns like a shower of rain?"

Architecture now occupied a full share of the royal brain. The hand corn-mills presented by the British Government had been erected within the

palace walls, and slaves were turning the wheels with unceasing diligence. "Demetrius the Armenian made a machine to grind corn," exclaimed His Majesty, in a transport of delight, as the flour streamed upon the floor; "and although it cost my people a year of hard labour to construct, it was useless when finished, because the priests declared it to be the Devil's work, and cursed the bread. But may Sáhela Selássie die! These engines are the invention of clever heads. Now I will build a bridge over the Beréza, and you shall give me your advice."

Early the ensuing morning the chief smith was accordingly in attendance with hammer and tongs; and "when the sun said hot," the pious monarch, having first paid his orisons in the church of the Trinity, proceeded, with all suitable cunning, to plan the projected edifice beneath a fortunate horoscope. Twelve waterways were traced with stones under his skilful superintendence on a site selected after infinite discussion; and in five minutes a train of slaves from the establishment at Debra Berhán were heaping together piles of loose boulders to serve as piers. Splinters of wood connected the roadway, and in three days the structure was complete, its appearance giving promise of what actually happened—demolition within as many short hours, on the very first violent fresh to which the river is subject during the annual rains.

But our predictions of this impending catastrophe were received with an incredulous shake of the

head; and my advice that orders should be issued to the Governors on the Nile to keep a vigilant look-out for the upper timbers on their voyage down to Egypt was followed by a good-humoured laugh and a playful tap on the shoulder of the audacious foreigner, who, to the horror and amazement of the obsequious courtiers, had thus ventured to speak his mind to the despot. In vain was it that I proposed to construct a bridge upon arches which might defy the impetuosity of the torrent. "All my subjects are asses," retorted His Majesty: "they are idle and lazy, and devoid of understanding. There is not one that will consent to labour, no, not one; and if through your means they should be compelled to perform the task, they would weep, and invoke curses on the name of the Gyptzis. Your corn mills are approved, because they save the women trouble, but by the shades of my ancestors!—a bridge ——" Here all sense of the decorum due to the sceptre was forgotten for the moment, and the monarch whistled aloud.

And the king was right. Weaving excepted, which in so cold a climate is an art indispensable to existence, the people of Shoa can hardly be said to practise any manufacture. The raw cotton, which is as cheap as it is excellent and abundant, is, by him who would be clad, handed over with a number of *ámoles* proportioned to the size of the cloth required. A common bow is used to spread the wool; and the spinning jenny being unknown, the

thread is twisted by means of the ancient spindle, to which motion is imparted by a rapid pressure betwixt the left palm and the denuded thigh, whilst the right hand is simultaneously carried upwards for the purpose of "roving." Time is here held of no account; and female labour having supplied the want of machinery in these preliminary operations, the twist is transferred to a rude locomotive loom, and a warm durable mantle is produced with the aid only of a simple shuttle.

British commerce has not only forced its way, but created markets and customers in many a wilder and more inaccessible portion of the globe than highland Abyssinia, and its operation promises to open the only means of improvement and civilization. Even in the absence of water carriage, the experience of many years has proved that the living ship of the desert is a machine of transport adequate to the most important traffic; and, if once established, that traffic would in a few years doubtless bind both people and ruler in the strongest chains of personal interest. It would rapidly change the pursuits of the people—convert the rude hut into a comfortable dwelling—limit, if not extinguish, the slave trade with Arabia, and if not reform, at least enlighten, the clouded Christianity of Æthiopia.

A commercial convention betwixt Great Britain and Shoa was a subject that had been frequently adverted to; and His Majesty had shaken his head when first assured that five hundred pair of hands

efficiently employed at the loom would bring into his country more permanent wealth than ten thousand warriors bearing spear and shield. But he had gradually begun to comprehend how commerce, equitably conducted, might prove a truer source of wealth than forays into the territories of the heathen. This conviction resulted in the expression of his desire that certain articles agreed upon might be drawn up on parchment, and presented for signature, which had accordingly been done; and the day fixed for the return of the embassy to Ankóber was appointed for the public ratification of the document by the annexure thereto of the royal hand and seal.

Nobles and captains thronged the court-yard of the palace at Angollála, and the king reclined on the throne in the attic chamber. A highly illuminated sheet, surmounted on the one side by the Holy Trinity—the device invariably employed as the arms of Shoa—and on the other by the Royal Achievement of England, was formally presented, and the sixteen articles of the convention in Amháric and English, read, commented upon, and fully approved. They involved the sacrifice of arbitrary appropriation by the crown of the property of foreigners dying in the country, the abrogation of the despotic interdiction which had from time immemorial precluded the purchase or display of costly goods by the subject, and the removal of penal restrictions upon voluntary movement within and

beyond the kingdom, which formed a modification of the obsolete national maxim, "never to permit the stranger who had once entered, to depart from Abyssinia." All these evils His Majesty unhesitatingly declared his determination to annul for the good of his people.

Tekla Mariam, the royal notary, kneeling, held the upper part of the unrolled scroll upon the state cushion, and the king, taking the proffered pen, inscribed after the words "Done and concluded at Angollála, the Galla capital of Shoa, in token whereof we have hereunto set our hand and seal,"—"Sáhela Selássie, who is the Negoos of Shoa, Efát, and the Galla." The imperial signet, a cross encircled by the word "Jesus," was then attached by the scribe in presence of the chief of the church, the Dedj Agafári, the Governor of Morát, and three other functionaries who were summoned into the alcove for the purpose.

"You have loaded me with costly presents," exclaimed the monarch as he returned the deed: "the raiment that I wear, the throne whereon I sit, the various curiosities in my storehouses, and the muskets which hang around the great hall, are all from your country. What have I to give in return for such wealth? My kingdom is as nothing."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX, No. 1.

ABSTRACT OF A THERMOMETRICAL REGISTER KEPT AT ANKÓBER, THE CAPITAL OF SHOA, DURING THE YEARS 1841, 1842.

Months.	Means.					Extremes						Winds.	
	Mean temperature of Month.	Mean daily Variation.	Mean Maximum.	Mean Minimum.	Difference of Mean Temperature of successive Months.	Greatest daily Variation.	Least daily Variation.	Extreme Monthly Variation.	Extreme Maximum.	Extreme Minimum.	Number of rainy Days.	Direction.	Force.
January, 1842	52	12·7	58·3	45·6	0·2	16	8	24	65	41	0	E. & E.S.E.	Light.
February -	54·6	10 5	59·8	49·3	2·6	18	4	20	66	46	7	E., S.E., E.S.E.	Light.
March - - -	57·2	11·5	62·9	51·5	2·6	16	6	23	69	46	4	E.	Light.
April - - -	55·2	7·7	59	51·3	2·0	11	2	16	62	46	14	E.	Strong.
May - - -	59·7	9·3	64·3	55·1	4·5	13	5	16	67	51	4	E.	Occy. Strong.
June - - -	62·1	7·9	66·2	58	2·4	17	5	17	69	52	8	E.	Occy. Strong.
July - - -	58·1	9·1	62·7	53·6	4·0	13	6	18	69	51	28	Variable.	Moderate.
August, 1841	55·8	9·7	60·7	50	2·3	13	7	16	63	47	26	Variable.	Moderate.
September -	55 3	9·2	60	50·6	0·5	14	5	17	63	46	13	N. & E.	Strong.
October - -	52·1	10·5	57·6	46·6	3·2	13	5	18	62	44	4	N.N.E., E.	Strong.
November -	51·9	11·6	57·7	46·1	0·2	16	6	17	60	43	4	N.N.E., E.	Strong.
December -	51·8	13·6	58·6	45	0·1	19	10	20	61	41	0	E.	Light.
Annual Means and Extremes	55·5	10·3	60·7	50·2	2·05	19	2	24	69	41	11		

REMARKS.—These observations were made with horizontal, self-registering thermometers, sheltered from the rays of the sun, but freely exposed to the external air.

The greatest difference between the mean temperature of the coldest month (December) and the hottest (June) was only 10°; whilst the greatest range during the whole year between the extreme minimum, 41°, and maximum, 69°, amounted only to 28°; the mean annual temperature having been 55½ in latitude 9° 35′ north.

APPENDIX, No. II.

REMARKS ON THE GEOLOGY, BOTANY, AND ZOOLOGY OF THE HIGHLANDS OF SOUTHERN ABYSSINIA.

GEOLOGY.

When the portion of North-eastern Africa that is to form the province of inquiry received its present configuration, the fountains of the deep may be supposed to have opened at once upon a surface, of which the prior quality and condition has become so shut out from human observation, that analogies, drawn from other countries under similar circumstances, must supply this deficiency.

Porphyry forms the general basis of all the different volcanic formations discernible. From the pinnacle of Jebel Goodah, on the Gulf of Arabia, it may be traced, though indistinctly, in the minor outrunners of the Abyssinian Alps, to the province of Efát, where it passes under red sandstone. The principal Shoan range, and the high westerly plateau towards the valley of the Nile, present solely secondary formations, but the porphyry again emerges on the southerly borders in the ranges of Garra Gorphoo and Bulga; whilst the left bank of the Háwash valley is distinctly of primitive crystalline formation.

The overlying rocks, which seem to have been poured from the centre of this tract, consist of masses of trachyte and columnar basalt, of pyramids of wacke, and beds of lava and tufwacke, with strata of conglomerates and sandstones. The former of these, the trachyte and basalt, belong to the lofty mountains of Abyssinia; whereas wacke, lava, tuffo, and scoria, cover the surface, and form the hills of the desert below; and many districts present volcanoes which, not half a century ago, were in violent activity.

The hills of Mentshar, Efât, and Giddem, are detached ranges, running nearly parallel to the Shoan alps. Disclosing in some few spots the nature of their interior, it appears that immediately over the porphyry lies a red sand-stone, embedding vast quantities of coal, and presenting a true stratification. It consists of minute but quite perfect hexagon dodecaëders of quartz in a white cement, is very soft, and cleaves sometimes in regular squares. Its depth was not observed to be very great, nor did the overlying formations, a marl and conglomerates, seem to form obstacles to the miner.

The Shoan mountains, of alpine height, exhibit a structure of basalt, wacke, and trachyte; the latter, in all its varieties, surrounds a nucleus of basalt, basaltic wacke, and dolerite. The conglomerates and tuffos at their feet, and partly on their terraces and tops, are of trachytic nature, and sometimes pierced through by small dikes of basalt. Veins of ochre and clay, holes filled with scoria, with intrusions of larger or smaller fragments of various rocks and minerals, and a kind of stratification, are the principal features of this trachytic formation.

When the action began, craters or clefts were formed in the then existing crust of trap-rocks, which in their turn were covered with masses of trachytic lava; a little later, the tuffos and conglomerates were deposited, which prove the importance of augite in their formation by numerous crystals of pyroxen embedded in them. Subsequently new basaltic eruptions either raised these deposits to their present height, or pierced them through in their original sites, both cases occurring on the same locality.

The basalt composing the hills about Ankóber presents no vestige of olivin, nor does it influence the magnetic needle; but a distinction between basalt and greenstone in their finer-grained varieties is difficult; and to determine in words the affinity which they bear to each other in the present instance, the rock might be styled basaltic greenstone. Columns, pentagonal or heptagonal, crown the tops of hills, and seem rather a composition of horn-

blende than of augite and feldspar. Scoriaceous varieties are found on the outsides of the later protruded masses.

The trachyte is generally a compact mass of grey feldstein, which contains crystals of glassy feldspar, irregularly embedded, and in different quantities. Some varieties are porous, some full of small holes, others black from grains of obsidian; and a few, especially near the dikes, incline to phonolite.

To the westward the ridge terminates in a high plateau, the western Galla provinces of the kingdom. This vast plain is crossed in various directions by hill ranges, the greater part of which do not rise to any considerable height. Here true basalt is disclosed in all the grandeur of its columnar cleavage, but no other species of rock. Deep and narrow ravines carry off the superabundant waters, and pits of tolerable ironstone afford a supply of metal for the manufacture of weapons.

The chief bearing of the mountain chains in Shoa is north and south, with spurs to the west and east. The towering height to which they rise, in a nearly uninterrupted ascent, may be calculated to be from eight to nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and their single pinnacles far exceed that limit. They are most abrupt, and difficult of access, excepting by the only two passes to the high western plateau. Ravines and chasms of a depth which admits the sun but for few hours, tell of the catastrophe which resulted in their formation. Inaccessible steep cliffs and dismal precipices everywhere line the tiresome footpath of the lonely muleteer.

The hills of Efát present more rounded forms; their slopes are better cultivated, and their tops afford the most eligible positions for the abode of the Abyssinian farmer. During the rainy season, all the many rivers which at other times carry only sufficient water for the purposes of the cultivator, not only fill their deeply-excavated beds, but overflowing and inundating all the lower parts of the hills, would sweep off any of the fragile Abyssinian buildings within reach; but the soil, when saturated with humidity, becomes so heavy and compact as to

be not easily washed away. The impetuosity of the mountain torrent undermines the fast-decomposing rock, and frequently brings down large boulders and loose stones, which, dashing against the sides of the ravine, are in no small degree instrumental to its d struction.

Not less important are the changes going on in the high range, since the time of their formation. Ice is of so uncommon occurrence, that we can scarcely attribute to it any considerable cooperation; but the action of water is materially assisted by occasional earthquakes. Gradual decomposition and decay has produced on the base, and produces still, conglomerates of various thickness and extent. The high plateau enjoys a thick coat of fertile black soil. Lakes, pools, morasses, and swamps, are frequent; the rivers of little fall have muddy and miry beds, which on that account become unfordable during the rains.

A few hot mineral wells are known and made use of in Efât and Giddem. Precious metals and precious stones have not yet been discovered; but of useful mineral products, iron, sulphur, and coal, are the principal. Iron ores are the riches of the high plateau, the oxy-hydrate being the best of them. Enclosed in the basalt, it comes to view only in the ravines, whence it is scraped out. From the western borders of the Adel country, and from the extinct volcanoes of Mentshar, is derived the small supply of native sulphur required; the pits are described as exceedingly copious. Coal-beds appear to extend along the whole of the eastern frontier of Shoa; but the combustible nature of the fossil is scarcely known in the country. Copper, tin, zinc, and salt, are all imported into Shoa; the Adaïel possessing the last commodity in abundance. The Shoan clay proves a very indifferent material for the manufacture of earthenware. Excellent quarries could be worked, but the primitive fashion of the dwellings is independent of the use of stone.

BOTANY.

The provinces that compose the kingdom of Shoa enjoy not

only political but also natural and physical boundaries. From the luxuriant vegetation, or the parched-up desert of a tropical clime, we suddenly ascend to regions where the blessings of fertility are more equably diffused, and which serve as granaries to the inhabitants of the lowlands.

From the general nature of the rocks, it is obvious that the soil consists chiefly of decomposed feldspar, which requires abundance of water. Dews, rains, and springs, however, so moisten the mountain side, that artificial irrigation need be resorted to but on few localities. Along the foot of the hills, rude channels, dug out of the sandy or gravelly soil, conduct abundance of water to plantations at a distance from the river side; and, in these lower regions, periodical inundations supply the want of rain.

It is an established fact, that the *cryptogamic plants* of cellular construction, are in different zones nearly the same. Under similar circumstances the same lichen covers the face of the rock in Europe as in the continents of the torrid zone, the same mould lines decaying matter, and the same fungus cleaves to bark and root. But, compared with the other orders of plants, the cellulars are most defective in numbers throughout Abyssinia, the peculiarities of the climate being very unfavourable to their development.

Every kind of parasitic plant is looked upon with a suspicious eye in Abyssinia; and those of the vascular orders furnish to the conjuring practitioner his principal remedies. But the mushrooms (*Demastafi*), the fungi and puff-balls (*Ya arrogie siet phis*), are believed to pollute the finger that touches them, and to be downright poison, Mould, of course, thrives exuberantly on every substance in so moist a climate as that of Shoa. The blight is but too well known; the *Boletus igniarius* grows abundantly in the forests; *Parmeliæ* and other lichens cover rocks, or depend fantastically from the withered branches of gigantic trees. *Mosses*, however, are very scarce, and only of four kinds.

The *vascular acotyledonic plants*, the ferns, might likewise

be expected in greater variety among the Abyssinian weeds than is actually the case. The deep recesses of the few remaining forests harbour some kinds which very closely resemble European forms, and belong to the genera *Aspidium*, *Polypodium*, *Asplenium*, *Adiantum*, *Scolopendrium*, *Ophioglossum*, and *Pteris*. No tree is among them, nor are the Abyssinians aware of the useful properties of the tribe. *Adianthum Capillus Veneris* is called in Amháric "*Sera Besoo*," i. e. much work—finely wrought.

Of the four orders into which the tribe of *monocotyledonic plants* is naturally subdivided, viz. the Grasses, the Lilies, the Orchides, and the Palms, the first undoubtedly deserves our principal attention, for it is by far the most numerous and important. The great elevation of the Abyssinian plains is so favourable for the cultivation of all *Cerealia* of the temperate zone, that they may rival the very best agricultural districts of Northern Europe, whilst the low country along the foot of the mountains produces some kinds of tropical grain, and would fully answer for the cultivation of rice, which at present is unknown in the country.

The Abyssinian husbandman takes great trouble in improving the cultivated sorts of grain, by changing the seed-corn at every season, and sometimes by sowing promiscuously different sorts to produce new varieties. Hence the astonishing number of distinguishable kinds cultivated in a small compass of ground under certain established appellations, and brought into use for very different purposes. Within a circumference of five miles around Ankóber are found, of juwarree, 28 varieties; of wheat, 24; of barley, 16; of rye, 2; of teff, 4; of oats, 2; of maize, 2. Various kinds of bread and cakes are prepared from some of these; malt for beer is chosen from others; and the inferior kinds are given to slaves and cattle.

The existing meadow-grasses answer so well, that an introduction of new species, or a regular culture, is not attempted. In times of great famine the seeds of some of these grasses come into use as food. In the swamps and humid meadows, and in many rivulets, species of Cyperus and Scirpus are very frequent,

some of which attain immense height, being used for thatching, or in the manufacture of baskets, mats, &c. Papyrus also grows in the low countries of Efát.

The following species of grasses and grain are cultivated: Lorghum vulgare (*Mashila*), the Juwarree of India, and Durrha of Arabia, in many varieties, the principal of which are: A (*Sengada*), with red spreading spike; B (*Wogari*), with yellow, compact pendent spike. The young stalks contain a great deal of saccharine, and are chewed: they attain, in good situations, the enormous height of eighteen feet. The produce of Efát and Giddem in this grain is chiefly exported to the countries of the Adaïel; but a small quantity comes to the Shoan marts for inferior kinds of beer, unleavened bread, and the food of mules. In Shoa itself Mashila cannot be raised on account of the low temperature.

Saccharum officinarum, the sugar-cane (*Shonkar*), is also planted to a small extent in the low country. The art of making sugar being unknown, it is only chewed; and although regarded a great luxury, and sent in token of friendship by the great, no particular care is bestowed upon improving its growth.

Elusine Tocussa (*Dagusa*), a minute grain in quarternaire crosswise disposed spikes, is produced on a low grass extensively cultivated in Northern Abyssinia; and the Emperor of Gondar is said to be forced by etiquette to eat cakes of it, to the exclusion of other farinaceous food.

Poa Abyssinica (*Teff*). This millet-like seed is a favourite with all Abyssinians, although the bread made of it is extremely unwholesome and insipid. Four varieties are found, two of a brown, and two of a white kind. The latter has the preference; and the finest, called *Manya Teff*, is grown only upon the king's fields, and can never be purchased by the subject. The straw of the *Teff* is regarded the best stable-fodder.

Zea Maize (*Mar Mashila*), i. e. Honey-sweet Mashila, is principally eaten when fresh and milky. A little roasted it is a most acceptable offering to the visiter. Sixteen kinds of barley (*Geps*) are raised on the hill-tops, and on the high plateau of the

Galla country, where neither juwarree nor wheat will thrive. Its greatest consumption is in brewing, but mules and horses are also fed on it, and the finer sorts are eaten (*Mariam Sahr Litch Alkuso Sandarash*). *Barya Settat*, i. e. "the slaves' portion," as might be imagined, is not of first-rate quality.

Secale cereale (*Damash Sanaf Kolo*) finds a limited consumption, mixed with other flour in bread.

Triticum æstivum. hibernum, etc. (*Sendi.*) Shoa can boast of twenty-four varieties of wheat. Many of these were originally cultivated by the Galla, and subsequently introduced. The other provinces of Abyssinia have also furnished various kinds; but the most esteeemed are indigenous, viz. *Y'abuna ehel*, *Ya beri mangada*, *Ya gosh gumbar*, i. e. "Aboon's grain;" "bullock's molar tooth;" "buffaloes' forehead." Wheat is frequently eaten unground, in a mixture of parched grain, called *Kolo*, which is the only store carried by the Amhára warrior into the field.

Avena spec. (*Gherama*) is a small kind of oats, sown on the poorest fields, in order that favourite mules and horses may crop it while yet green. In times of scarcity the poor are compelled to resort to it.

Bambusa arundinacea (*Shemal*). The bamboo is not indigenous in any part of the country, but groves are planted on the king's grounds, in order to supply poles for the royal tents.

The following are the grasses found in every pasture:—Lolium temulentum (*Enkerdad*), much dreaded as poison; Chloris spec. (*Agerma*); Andropogon distachyum (*Gasha*); Anthistiria spec. (*Sambalet*); Sporobolus spec. (*Ya teff sahr*), the seeds eaten as those of the teff; Poa brizoides (*Ya Kiri sahr*); Kiri is a species of finch, which eats the small seeds; Setaria spec. (*Ya oosha Sendado.*)

The next order, that of the *Lilies*, is not so numerous as might be expected of Africa, but when a species does appear, it covers vast tracts with its lovely colours. None but the edible kinds of Allium are cultivated in Abyssinia, ornamental gardens being quite unknown throughout the country. Some grow in swampy meadows, especially those with bulbs, more properly

ranking as lilies: others, with perennial stem, are found on dry waste places, such as the Asparagus and the Aloë. The whole year round, the meads are graced by the lovely blossoms of two Commelineæ, viz. Commelina Africana, and Tradescantia spec. Both having small oval tubers, they are called *Off angoon* and *Off gola*, i. e. "bird's egg" (*off*, a bird; *angoon* and *gola*, or more commonly *angola*, an egg). These tubers are eaten in times of famine. One ixia, a very beautiful kind, of the morasses around Angollála, springs up immediately after the termination of the rains. Hæmanthus coccineus, Amaryllis clavata, Gloriosa spec., are rare plants of Efát; Bulbocodium spec. is a very transient form, observable a few days after the "rains of Bounty." Onions and garlic (*Neitch Shongort*) are favourite vegetables; various kinds of Aloë (*Ya jib Shongort*) adorn the wastes of Efát, and furnish good fibres for making ropes. Asparagus retrofractus (*Saréti*), and Asparagus Æthiopicus (*Kastanitcha*), are fructiferous and climbing shrubs: a green twig of the first stuck in the hair of the sinciput, is a token of exultation after a successful encounter with an enemy or wild beast; the wood of the second is of peculiar hardness, and splitting well serves the Amhára scribe as a pen. Lastly, one Smilax (*Ashkila*) affords the stick in common use as a tooth-brush.

That equally beautiful and important order, the *Orchideæ*, might be supposed to find its natural ground in Abyssinia, where both atmosphere and soil are so favourable; but ginger is still imported from Guráguê: arrow-root and salep are unknown, and not a single kind of the respective genera is an inhabitant either of Shoa or Efát. The real *Orchideæ* of the forests, moreover, are few in number. Epidendrum capense, cleaving to the bark of the wild olive-tree, is the only representative of that interesting group, the *Epidendreæ*. Of the plantain tribe, three species have been introduced from the south, but apparently with little advantage; viz. *Mooz*, Musa paradisiaca, a coarse kind of plantain, which is reared on some few spots in Efát for the royal table, and two species of Urania, called *Ensete* and *Koba*. These

are planted in Shoa for the sake of their leaves; they seldom advance to flower and fruit, in consequence of the low temperature. The only visible difference between them is, that in the Koba the middle rib of the leaf is on the underside red, as also the stem; whilst in the Ensete both are light green. Either of these trees, when suffered to grow, attains a height of twelve feet in the stem, exceeding by far that of the Mooz; the leaves are equal in size to those of the latter, and are only used to bake bread upon. Their proper home is Gurágué, the famous seat of so many botanical riches. Seed-capsules of the Koba brought from that country contain four or five angular nuts, full of a mealy substance, like the finest arrow-root, which is boiled and given to children to make them grow; the base of the fruit is filled with a delicious pulp like that of the plantain. In Gurágué the young shoots of the Ensete form a principal part of the diet, but they are despised by the Amhára, who are not at all addicted to vegetables. The fibres are used in the manufacture of ropes and mats, which form an important article of trade with Shoa. Ensete and Koba are hardier than the Mooz; and towering above the enclosures of the lofty villages, impart an aspect not properly belonging to the landscape, and strangely contrasting with many alpine associates.

The *Palms* of the continents of the eastern world are, with very few exceptions, inhabitants of the sea-borders, and do not thrive at any considerable elevation or even distance inland. The coast of the Adaïel is therefore the only locality where three species of this tribe, viz. Phœnix dactylifera, Hyphæne crucifera, and Borassus flabelliformis, appear; but so scantily, that the date must be imported from Arabia. Baskets and mats are manufactured of the leaves of all, and some toddy is prepared of the Borassus especially.

The preceding enumeration of acotyledonic and monocotyledonic plants is not sufficient to determine the systematic place due to the Abyssinian vegetation in general. The Dicotyledones, comprising two-thirds of all the plants, will necessarily help to show, that although included within the tropics, the

Flora of Shoa, and of some of the Galla provinces to the west, is, on the whole, subalpine. The avenues of approach to them from the eastward, evince in their scanty dress the influence of a tropical sun; and between these two extremes, a happy and most fertile province intervenes, where, by the side of the hardy grain, cotton and coffee may be raised—where a tea-plant and many species of indigo grow wild—and where, in fact, a temperate and a torrid clime exchange their products as it were upon neutral ground.

The *Chlamydoblasta* number but very few species in Abyssinia. One Nymphaæ only, on the lakes of Shoa, and one Aristolochia (bracteata) of the Adaïel country, could be discovered. This latter, called *Gerbaad*, is a secret remedy with the Danákil against poisoned wounds, and in fact they are prone to attribute mysterious qualities to the most of their weeds. Pepper is not found either in a wild or cultivated state, although nothing would oppose the introduction of that favourite condiment, which at present, under the appellation of *Gunda Berberi* (*Gunda*, an ant; *Berberi*, hot spice) is imported from Arabia and India.

Of *apetalous Gymnoblasts*, some important species are to be recorded, since they form the chief pride of the forests. And justly beginning with the Coniferæ, the fir (cedar), which graces the Alps of Northern Abyssinia, is replaced in Shoa by a gigantic juniper, Juniperus excelsa (*Dct*). This noble tree of the woods as well as of the churchyards attains in its life of one century a height of upwards of one hundred and sixty feet, with four to five in diameter at the base. Growing nearly in the shape of a cypress, it throws off continually the lower branches, which shoot out almost at a right angle from the stem, so that two-thirds of the same are void of green; the top is always a pyramid, and generally scanty. The wood is very inferior, but splitting readily, it supplies, in the absence of proper carpenters' tools, the chief timber used in the construction of huts and churches; and it forms, besides, the common fuel. Neither is any use made of the resin or berries; but

twigs lopped off the melancholy trees that overshadow the cemetery, are often strewn upon the corpse before the grave is filled up. A yew tree, Taxus elongata, *Sigba*, also of the Shoan forests, keeps within more moderate dimensions; sixty feet in height, and five in circumference, is the utmost. The tough wood, like that of the wild olive-tree, furnishes the timber for works of art which are to last some time. To tarry beneath its shade, or to inhale the smoke of burning yew wood, is regarded as particularly noxious.

The low temperature reigning in the Alps of Abyssinia does not prohibit the growth of a species of fig, which contrasts strangely enough with the tall juniper. The *Shoala*, a kind of Banyan tree, with large, oval, acute, serrated, and subcordate leaves, and racemes of fruits attached only to the stem and principal branches, measures frequently seven feet in diameter, with a height of forty feet, at an age of two-score years. Its roots are partly above ground; but of secondary, or branch-roots, there is no vestige. Requiring no small space for expansion, it stands commonly on the outskirts of the forests, or quite alone, but its shade is extremely dense and unfavourable to other vegetation. The fruit, of the size of a pigeon's egg, brown and insipid, might be eaten by people in distress. In the low country the Sycamore Fig-tree makes its appearance; it is called *Worka*, i. e. "the Golden," by the Amhára, and *Woda* by the Galla; and has, with those of the latter nation, who are still in the bonds of idolatry, a sacred signification. Being planted over the tombs of notable persons, conjurers, or heroes, offerings are brought to it, and hung up on the branches at certain festivals, when the neighbouring tribes feast together upon that holy and neutral ground. The Worka stands always near running water, towering far over the jungle, although the undivided stem is scarcely ten feet high. The leaf has a yellow tomentum below; and the fruit forms a favourite food of monkeys and of various birds, but is not touched by man.

The *Kuaraf*, Gunnera spec., another plant of the same family, of *Artocarpeæ*, is an important vegetable during the strict fast

of Lent. It grows in swamps and rivulets, and is an annual low plant from a perennial root, with large radical leaves and a leafless stalk, bearing the minute flowers on a bunchy raceme. The petioles, ribs of leaves, and stalks, are eaten fresh when stripped of the epidermis; and their taste is similar to that of the sorrel. The common stinging-nettle (*Sama*) is, by boiling, also prepared into an indifferent food during the quadragesimal low diet. The troublesome weed grows everywhere to a height of five feet.

Of the many *Polygoneæ*, a few must be noticed on account of their frequent occurrence and of their use. Polygonum tomentosum (*Ba Weha lay*, i. e. "upon the water,") and Polygonum serratum, cover the margins of morasses and lakes. Polygonum frutescens (*Umboatoa*) is the most common hedge-shrub. Rumex arifolius (*Makmako*), frequent in swampy meadows, yields, in its fleshy root, a reddish dye for colouring butter. The root of another species of Rumex, called *Tutt*, is believed to be a nostrum for barbarous and criminal purposes; but, happily, it is quite innocent. Instead of these species, which all belong to the Flora of Shoa, there appear in the Adel country several Boerhaaviæ. Introduced into Shoa is a kind of willow (*Aheia*), much employed in the manufacture of saddles.

The *monopetalous Gymnoblasts*, being a class next to the highest and most important, contain a large number of plants, of which the following are pointed out: Plantago Capensis (*Ya gura wosfi*), and Plantago Ægyptiaca (*Burrh*), both common weeds in Shoa; Plumbago Capensis, with large white corolla, in Efât, and Scabiosa decurrens (*Adai*), with snowy heads, in Shoa, are highly ornamental; Echinops horridus, growing to the height of ten feet about Angolláła; Carthamus tinctorius (*Suf*), extensively cultivated in Efât for the oil of the seeds and for the dye yielded by the flowers; Carduncellus spec. (*Dorakus*),—a decoction of the dried flower-heads is administered in ague. Several twining species of Mikania adorn the forests of Shoa; two fructiferous Cacaliæ, full of a balsamic sap, and one Klenia, exhibit the brightest scarlet in the jungles of Efât. Pteronia

spinosa, and Helichrysum vestitum, are hardy shrubs found on the slopes. Species of Gnaphalium and Bidens are annoying weeds in the cotton-fields. The numerous kinds of Radiatæ contain only one of importance, viz. the Polymnia Abyssinica (*Nug*), which is the chief oil plant. *Suf* and *Nug* oil mixed is called *Kabanug*, and only used for burning, since it possesses strong purging qualities. The family of the *Compositæ* furnishes altogether but a small number of useful plants in proportion to its extensiveness.

The *Campanulaceæ* are low annual insignificant weeds, one Lobelia excepted, viz. the Rhynchopetalum montanum, or *Jibera*. This strange perennial plant, with the aspect of a palm-tree, grows chiefly in moist ravines among the high mountains, and is especially frequent about Ankóber. The stem attains upwards of fifteen feet in height, and five inches in diameter. The top carries a crown of large leaves; and the spike is one foot and a half long. When the seeds are ripe, the plant dies suddenly. One Erica (*Asta*), five feet in height, assists likewise to dispel the aspect of a European Flora, which is conveyed by the Veronica Beccabunga and Anagallis of the meadow rivulets. Scrophularia frutescens (*Djodjo*), with a strong smell of camphor, is used as a febrifuge and charm; two kinds of Orobanche are also among the conjurer's infallible medicines. Acanthus carduifolius is the choicest camel-fodder in the desert. Rare specimens of Hyperanthera Moringa, the same as in Arabia, stand near the pools of the low country: a gum, becoming instantly red in the air, flows freely out of any bruise, but is applied to no use. Mint, thyme, and other plants of the family *Labiatæ*, so replete with ætheric oils, do not enjoy the reputation due to them. Of the many kinds only three have names and use, viz. Origanum spec. (*Kassi*), and Ziziphora spec. (*Lomi shett*, i. e. "lime-smell"), which are used in the fomentation of boils.; Leonotis spec. (*Ras Kimr*), as anthelminthicum by a decoction of the dried leaves, mixed with a little oil. Several *Convolvulaceæ* and *Boragineæ* pass disregarded. Of the former, Convolvulus pes capræ binds the

sand of the sea-beach; of the latter, a few specimens of Cordia Abyssinica (*Wanzey*) grow in Efát.

Capsicum frutescens (*Geich Berberi*, i. e. "red pepper"), the most important of hot spices in warm climes, and Nicotiana Tabacum (*Tombako*), also an indispensable commodity to many of the Moslem population, are objects of diligent cultivation in the lower country: yet the only tolerable tobacco must be imported from the Ittoo Galla. Solanum marginatum (*Umboi*), a shrub, the seeds of which are strewed on the surface of ponds to stupify the fish, which are nevertheless still eatable, and Atropa arborea (*Amoraroe*), the red juice of whose berry is used by the Amhára women to stain their palms and nails, are common hedge-shrubs in Shoa. Of the narcotic qualities of the Datura Stramonium (*Atafaris*), the Abyssinian sorcerer is well aware. The thief-detecter makes a youth smoke the dried leaves of it in order to cause stupefaction, and thus promote the semblance of powers of divination. Neither the potato nor any other edible kind of Solanum has yet been introduced into Shoa.

The families of *Contortæ*, *Rubiaceæ*, *Ligustrinæ*, have many representatives in the low country. Stapelia pulvinata and Calotropis gigantea are the most prominent: the former has a fleshy, quadrangular, and four-winged stem of two feet height, and when in flower is scarcely approachable; the latter furnishes good charcoal for gunpowder. Kannahia laniflora, with particularly sweet-smelling flowers, lines the borders of the rivulets in Efát; Carissa spec. (*Agame*) has edible berries, and flourishes both in Efát and Shoa. Melanea verticillata (*Adguar*), is a jungle-tree of ten feet height, with purging berries. Psychotria spec. (*Doda Gula*), is a shrub found in Shoa; Coffea Arabica (*Boon*) grows wild in many of the warmer provinces, but is diligently plucked out by the Christian population, who consider the use of the berry to be as foreign to salvation as the doctrine of the false prophet. Where his followers abide in greater numbers, or uncontrolled, as in Giddem and in the countries of the Ittoo and Aroosi Galla, the coffee-tree grows unmolested, no care, however, being taken of it; but its proper home seems to lie

far to the west and south, in the kingdoms of Caffa and Enarea, where a donkey's load is sold for the twentieth part of a dollar. Two kinds of jessamine grace with their fragrant flowers the hedges and groves. Olea spec. (*Woira*) is, with the juniper and yew, the principal forest-tree of Shoa; sixty to eighty feet in height, and four in diameter, are its common dimensions. The wood of the wild olive-tree affords excellent fuel and timber; but no use is made of the fruit, which attains the size of a large pea.

Among the *polypetalous Gymnoblasts*, in which vegetation has attained the highest degree of perfection with respect to variety of shape and colour, as well as medical and nutritious qualities, we find several important families altogether wanting in the Flora of Abyssinia. The Pomaceæ and Amygdaleæ are absent, and the existing scarcity of fruit-trees, whether wild or cultivated, is indeed most apparent. Others of more limited utility are very numerous, as the Tricoccæ, Rhoeadeæ, Amarantinæ; but the Leguminosæ form by far the largest family of polypetalous phanerogames.

Of *Umbelliferæ* there exists in the low country one Ferula, a small tree of unknown properties. In Shoa there are several Caucalis (*Karambashu*), growing on pasture grounds, and poisonous to cattle. Coriandrum sativum (*Dumbelan*), and Anethum fœniculum, the well-known European spices, are cultivated. Berberis tinctoria of the forests yields a good yellow dye for mourning apparel. Clypea spec. (*Engotshid*), is a creeper with pellate leaves, upon which small cakes are baked. Ranunculus trilobus (*Goodie*) is a troublesome weed on the meadows. Nigella sativa (*Asmud*) is occasionally cultivated as a spice. Several species of Polygala flourish unnoticed. Some *Balsamineæ* grow in shady places; one of them, Impatiens grandis (*Girshid*), has a tuberous root, with the juice of which the women paint their palms and faces red. Thlaspi bursa pastoris (*Ya bug elat*, i. e. "sheep's tail"), the cosmopolitan weed, follows agriculture also in Abyssinia. Sinapis Nigra (*Sanafitch*) grows wild, and is sometimes re-

sorted to as an additional ingredient of the pepper sauce called *wotz*. Brassica spec. (*Goomun*), a cultivated coarse kind of cow-cabbage, perennial, and five feet high, is eaten as a vegetable after much boiling; the seeds are also used for oil. Of the numerous *Capparideæ*, Cadaba Indica is particularly important in the Adel desert, being for many scores of miles the only shrub which affords shelter from the noontide sun. Two species of Capparis make impenetrable hedges in Efát. Cucumis Africanus (*Ya medur oomboi*) is an annual plant, of sandy and desert places; the seeds are a favourite medicine in Shoa, and also with the Galla. Cucumis colocynthis is frequent in the valleys adjoining the Bahr Assal, but is not collected either for home use or for exportation. Cucurbita lagenaria (*Kel*) grows wild, and is cultivated in Efát for water-bottles. Cucurbita pepo, a common coarse pumpkin in Shoa, serves as a vegetable. Bryonia scabrella (*Ya Amora M'sa*) is a much dreaded poison. Two species of Flacourtia, *Koshim* and *Menedem*, have edible berries.

Viola montana, a violet without smell, grows in the forests of Shoa. *Tamaricinæ* occur in the desert, from the sea-shore as far as to the Háwash; the presence of the principal kind, called *Sagan*, is, to the Dankáli herdsman, a sure indication of water near the surface. The genus Hypericum has only showy plants. The *Chenopodeæ*, chiefly weeds, contain one species (called *Amedmadoo*) which is used for polishing metal. Achyranthes spec. (*Talineh*) is a styptic medicine. Phytolacca Abyssinica (*Endott*) is a common shrub in Shoa and Efát; a cold infusion of the dried and pounded berry possesses wonderful cleansing qualities, and is used instead of soap. Silene diantholdes (*Siakul*) is a pretty flower found on the high mountains. Calanchoë verea (*Endehahoola*) is a very common succulent plant, the leaves of which are dried and smoked like tobacco in phthisical affections, or the juice of them administered as refrigerants in inflammatory fevers. Epilobium villosum (*Ya lahm tchau*, i.e. "cows' salt") is regarded as an excellent and wholesome fodder for horned cattle, if given occasionally.

Punica granatum (*Rooma*), sometimes cultivated in Efát, was introduced from Arabia. Several species of Grewia bear edible fruits in the desert, where their acidity is very grateful.

To the various kinds of *Byttneriaceæ* and *Malvaceæ*, no particular interest is attached, except to the cotton (*Det*) Gossypium Nigrum, which is cultivated in two varieties, the finer and smaller species growing in the shade of the taller and more hardy. Both are regarded as indigenous to Abyssinia. Grain and cotton-cloth form the principal staple commodities of Shoa. Linum usitatissimum (*Tulbah*) is cultivated merely for the seeds, of which oil is made: flax-dressing not being understood. Vitis vinifera (*Woin Saf*), planted as a curiosity in the king's gardens, bears plentifully, and would doubtless answer well upon volcanic soil. Several species of Cissus interlace the jungles of Efát; one, especially, is a constant companion of the Camel-thorn Acacia in the desert.

Euphorbia Abyssinica (*Kolqual*), a singular sconce-like milk bush of the Abyssinian groves, gives charcoal for gunpowder; with the corrosive sap it is frequently attempted to stop ulcers of a phagedenic nature. The inspissated juice of two other species of Euphorbia, *Birgut* and *Anderfa*, serves as a drastic purgative. The ostrich-hunting Somauli poisons his arrows with the milk of Euphorbia antiquorum, which does not make the meat injurious. Ricinus Africanus (*Gulo*) affords in its seeds a famous medicine for cattle, and is frequent in Efát. Rhamnus spec. (*Gesho*) is a tonic, and a decoction of the leaves of this cultivated shrub is used in the manufacture of hydromel and beer instead of hops. Celastrus spec. (*Chaat*) is a species of the tea planted and used in Efát, but more extensively in Caffa and other countries of the interior. In Efát the fresh leaves are both chewed and used as an astringent médicine, or taken in order to dispel sleep: a decoction in water or milk being also drunk as a beverage, which tastes bitter enough. Hagenia Abyssinica (*Cosso*) affords, in a cold infusion of the dried flowers and capsules, the famous drasticum purgans and anthelminthicum of the Abyssinians. The tree is one of the most picturesque in

appearance. Balsamodendron Myrrha (*Kurbeta*) grows on the borders of Efát, in the jungle of the Háwash, and in the Adel desert. The resinous gum called *Hofali*, is collected for exportation. Balsamodendron Opobalsamum (*Besham*) is commonly found with the former, and grows even at Cape Aden. Citrus medica (*Lomi*) flourishes wild in the jungles of Giddem, and is cultivated in Efát: Citrus aurantium (*Bahr Lomi*), lately introduced from Arabia, and Citrus decumana var. (*Trunco*), with apple-like solid pulp, are both found in the royal orchards. Rubus pinnatus (*Injori*) yields the best of all wild-growing fruits in Abyssinia—a true blackberry of the forests. Rosa Abyssinica (*Kaga*), a tree-like dog-rose, bears an edible hip. The Brayera Abyssinica, which serves in Tigré instead of *Cosso*, is not known in the southern provinces.

Trifolium saxatile cespitosum (*Nagad*) is sown on the best meadows for green fodder. Vicia faba (*Bakkela*) is most extensively cultivated in Shoa and in the Galla countries to the west; the beans are eaten either fresh and green during the season, or, when dry, made up into soups. Ervum lens (*Missur*), Cicer arietinum (*Shimbrah*), Pisum sativum (*Attur*), Phaseolus spec. (*Adunguari*), are produced in Efát and other warm provinces of the kingdom. Many species of Indigofera, wild and unheeded, grow in the desert and on the borders of cultivation. Pterolobium lacerans (*Kantuffa*) is an impenetrable hedge-shrub abounding in Efát: the bark gives a red dye for leather. Tamarindus Indica attains a majestic size in the jungles of Efát, but is quite neglected; as are also various kinds of Senna (*Senamaki*). Dichrostachys cinerea, Acacia eburnea, Acacia planifrons, and other Camel-thorn trees called *Gerar*, are of the utmost importance to the wilderness and desert; in the latter, the umbrella-like tops collect man and beast beneath their scanty shade during the hottest hours of the day. Some yield superior gum arabic; the twigs serve as food for the camel, and the pods for goats and sheep.

The foregoing list of Abyssinian plants comprehends nearly all those which are of importance to the cultivator, farmer,

or physician; but no doubt double the number could be added by any people more enterprising and inquisitive than the inhabitants of Shoa. All kind of vegetation not directly useful and beneficial is regarded as a weed, and receives no special appellation; and few of the population know the names of any plant that is not a daily necessary of the kitchen. The physician's lore is kept a profound mystery; and there is not much lost by its limited diffusion, since the whole is a motley collection of very questionable experience and most degrading superstition.

ZOOLOGY.

Of the lowest order of animals, the *Radiatæ*, nearly the same may be said that was remarked above respecting the lowest order of plants; namely, that their species are in a less degree bound to certain limits of geographical distribution than those in which the respective types hasten in more marked characters to the highest possible perfection. None of the numerous tribe of *Radiatæ* are, in their proper home, directly exposed to the external air and its changes. They live in a medium, which generally preserves a mean temperature, with extremes not prohibiting the possibility of animal existence, and their ephemeral life is little liable to be cut short by any sudden change. Thus we find that the waters and animal humours produce, in different climes, similar beings, in which either the deficiency in bulk is made up by countless multitudes of individuals, or the deficiency in number by high reproductive powers.

Intestinal worms (*Wosfat*) prove one of the chief plagues of the Abyssinians. Not only ascarides, but also tape and thread worms (Tænia and Filaria), are to be constantly contended with. The frequency of this disposition must have its source in the usual diet, consisting of unleavened dough-like bread and raw meat, which the accompanying pepper sauce is not sufficient to correct. Once in every month the *Cosso* and other powerful purgatives are resorted to, and bring momentary relief; but

the Guinea-worm, living in the fleshy parts of the limbs, must be endured until it shall have perforated the skin.

The influence exercised upon the nature of the *Articulated Animals* or *Insects* by the quality of the other visible organized beings, both plants and animals, is much more apparent than in the above-named order of the *Radiatæ*. Being bound by the strongest ties to the limits of those beings which are assigned to them as food and home, their species present distinctly marked characters of geographical distribution throughout the world.

In Shoa and Efát there appears with the increase of vegetation a larger number of insects, but the most noxious of them remain only during the height of the season. This is most perceptible in the migrations of locusts and caterpillars, which, by a few cold rains, are induced to descend into the open wildernesses and deserts. Such a sudden relief from countless hosts of the locusts, called *Anbasa*, is invariably ascribed, by the superstitious farmer, to the special interposition and agency of his guardian saint, at whose shrine, in the hour of need, offerings and vows are liberally made. Various grasshoppers (*Sada*), mantidæ (*Feenta*), and cockroaches, do considerable damage during the hot season. A large black ant (*Goonda*), which bites ferociously, constructs no water-tight habitation, but intrudes at the beginning of the rains into the huts, from which it is expelled with the utmost difficulty. The Egyptian honey-bee (*Neb*), either kept in the farm-yards within baskets, or existing wild in the woods, finds abundance of odoriferous flowers. Honey is an important article of consumption, both in its natural form and when converted into mead.

Although so cold, the country is not free from the annoyances of flies (*Sembi*), and musquitoes (*Tenang*). White ants (*Mest*) are not so numerous and destructive in the upper as in the lower country. Small colonies of them live, and build their chambers beneath loose stones, but they never come into the houses, and, in fact, the juniper timber of the fragile edifices is seldom attacked by any wood vermin. Various most

beautiful butterflies, phalænes, and moths, while in the caterpillar state (*Tel*), despoil trees and plants that are of no value to the Abyssinian; but his plantations of cotton and cabbage rarely suffer. Neither the silkworm nor the mulberry-tree are found in the country.

Numerous varieties of beetles, of those families especially which remove animal matter and soil, with others of more cleanly habits, are comprised under the general appellation of *Densissa*. Among the former, the Coprophaga, many Egyptian species may be met with, as Copris Isidis, Ateuchus sacer, and others; among the latter, chiefly Cetoniæ, are found species nearly allied to or identical with some of Senegambia. One notable Inca, the male of which is armed with a powerful head excrescence, lives principally on the sap of wounded trees; Lycus appendiculatus frequents chiefly the flowers of Umbelliferæ; many Curculionides inhabit the plants of the family Compositæ, but Coccinellæ are the most numerous. Species of Lytta abound, but no use is made of them, the Shoans having no real medicine prepared from the animal kingdom. Spiders (*Sherarit*) and scorpions (*Kind*) are studiously avoided, or destroyed, as particularly impure and noxious, though the former never attack aught save their prey, and the sting of the latter is little dangerous. Total disregard of cleanliness is punished with a frightful increase of bodily vermin, as fleas (*Kunitsha*), lice (*Kemal*), bugs (*Tochan*), and acarus scabici (*Ekak*).

The large number of water-birds upon the lakes and morasses of Shoa effectually restrain an increase of *Snails* and *Shells*; some species of Bulimus (*Kendautchi*), minute Helices, Pupa, and Limax, are so few, that the damage done by them is not perceptible. Neither serve the larger kinds as food.

The known fresh-water *Fish* are insignificant in quality and quantity, and only serve to feed the numerous crocodiles which infest the main stream of the Háwash. Its various tributaries, when they first escape from the mountains, carry small species of Salmo and Perca (*Asa*), which are in great request during

Lenc; but the manner of taking them is primitive and imperfect.

All the *Amphibia* are objects of apprehension and superstition. Serpents (*Ebab*) are not numerous, and are chiefly of small kind, nor venomous, but the awe in which they are held is quite ridiculous. Tribes in the far west, described as being the meanest of men, and scarcely above the beasts, are charged by the Abyssinians with the heinous custom of eating snakes, and ornamenting their persons with necklaces of the backbone of that accursed animal. Two kinds of tortoises (*Yeli*) are found in the low country, Testudo Græca and Indica; the latter attains an enormous size in the deep impenetrable jungles of Mentshar. The dread entertained of the Saurii comprises all kinds, the harmless and the formidable. The Egyptian Gecko (*Enkakela*), the chamelion (*Eist*), the Scineus officinalis, and other numerous lizards, which make themselves most useful by the removal of so many annoying insects, are unrelentingly doomed to destruction, whilst the crocodiles (*Azo*) roam unmolested on the abandoned shores of the larger rivers and lakes.

The *Feathered Tribe* exist in great variety of species, which may in some degree be due to the preponderance of migratory birds. The *Scansores*, however, are principally stationary, their food seldom failing throughout the year. The noblest of them is a parrot-like Coliphimus (*Sorit*) of the Shoan forests. Lovely shades of green, and many tints of the brightest red, a stately crest, and a long rounded tail, make it a favourite with the Abyssinians. A tail-feather fastened in the hair of a daring warrior, is a token of late achievements in the battle-field. Two other kinds, called *Wans Sorit*, i. e. Sorit of the river-side, and *Aheia*, i. e. donkey, from its asinine tunes, are much inferior in beauty, though not in size. One, Coliphimus concolor, is of a dull greyish green; the other, C. fasciatus, black and white, with white zones, across the tail; the beak of the female is green; both live in Efát upon different grains and wild figs. Two small kinds of parrot inhabit the fig and tamarind trees of the lower country: their name, *Donkoro*, is also used figuratively of persons talking non-

sense. One corresponds almost with Psittacus Taranta. In the other, which is a little larger, the sexes are distinguished by the gay plumage of the male, which is green above and red below, whilst the female is greyish brown and yellow. Centropus Jardini, a beautiful kind of cuckoo, lives solitary on the fig-trees in Efât: several species of woodpeckers, which do not seem to differ from the South African kinds, are found on acacias and tamarinds.

Among the *Ambulatores* many migrate during winter-time from the mountains to the eastern plain; others arrive during summer from the North, most likely from Sennaar and Egypt. They rarely do any considerable damage on the plantations of Teff and Juwarree, whilst their services in destroying numberless vermin are most conspicuous. Bird-catching for food or for amusement is not a sport with the Amhára, but, on the other hand, there is no privilege in favour of the songsters—a study and imitation of the tunes of which might greatly improve the execrable attempts of music, vocal and instrumental, vented by the unskilful Abyssinian performer.

Two gaudy kinds of Alcedo play on the rivulets—Merops Bulockii and Nubicus. These truly African species of the fly-catcher are in the lower, Upupa epops, the common hoopoe, in the upper country. Certhia tacazze and chalybea, with two other equally beautiful kinds of the humming-bird, proceed with the seasons to their flower-gardens, when the return of rain here, and of warmth there, elicits the most fragrant blossoms, and covers the shrubs of the mountain-side, or the jungle-trees, with soft honey-insects. One of these humming-birds suspends its bag-like nest, ingeniously woven of raw cotton, by a string of the same material, to reeds, or cotton-plants. Buphaga Africana picks the larvæ of gad-flies out of the galled backs of camels, oxen, and mules, in spite of the struggles of the tortured animal. Jeterus larvatus, and other species of stares, weave their nests of grass, and line them inside with the woolly flowers of an Achyranthes. These nests are suspended in great numbers to the lower branches of solitary trees, and may have given origin to the story of the wonderful groves, where all the fruits are birds enclosed in a

shelf. Lamprotornis auratus, and some other kinds of thrushes, consume, during their short stay in Shoa of two months, immense numbers of insects. Among the Sylviadæ are some eminent songsters, especially Sylvia Pammelaina, and also species of Motacilla, and Saxicola, whilst one Muscipeta, the male of which has two tail-feathers three times as long as the whole body, is quite silent. The head and neck of this remarkable bird are steel-blue, the other parts of the plumage rusty-brown, except the two elongated middle feathers of the tail, which are snowy white, with black quills, and a brown plot at the extremity: they are used as an ornament for royalty. Lanius humeralis (*Gurameile*) is one of those fatal birds, the sudden appearance of which before an army at its outset, forebodes ill-success, and all manner of misfortune to single persons, if the tail be directed towards them. To the other kinds of shrikes no such unhappy celebrity is attached, although they seem not less litigious, and anxious to draw off by their noise the attention of a wayfarer from the vicinity of their nests. Alauda alpestris comes from the West, and returns again after two months, April and May. The most numerous kinds of finches, Ploceus, Pyrgita, Linaria, &c., are all comprised under the appellation *Off*, i. e. small bird: they seem generally to have fixed quarters. Colius Capensis (*Rasa*) is solely in Efát, in company with the Wans sorit.

Ravens and crows are of three kinds, but one of them (*Kura*) is particularly remarkable on account of its beak, which is much higher than the crown, carrying a considerable protuberance on the top, the nostrils being situated in an excavation, which runs forward in a broad furrow; the bill is very massive, twice as high as it is broad, and terminating in a small hook; the colour of the plumage is deep brownish black, except a broad bar of white feathers across the sinciput, and sometimes a narrow white line down the back of the neck. Its voice and mode of living and walking is just like that of our crows, but it does not suffer the approach of other species.

Swallows are never failing, but the species vary in their visits. Hirundo Capensis and rustica appear to avoid each other, not

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being seen together in the same localities. Cypselus apus and Caprimulgus species are rarely met with. Coracias afra and Abyssinica live only in the lower country, also the various kinds of Hornbill. *Erkoom*, Buceros Abyssinicus, by far the largest, is mischievous to the Juwarree fields; but the damage done is compensated by his great liking for field-mice also. The Erkoom runs swiftly, and rises seldom into the air · the white wing-feathers are much esteemed as an ornament of the hair by the triumphant warrior. Buceros nasutus, and another species, which differs slightly in colour and size, eat small lizards and chameleons. Buceros erythrorhynchus (*Sholak*), the most frequent of them, rids the plantations of many noxious insects.

The tribe of *Raptores* (*Amora*) is uncommonly numerous, and on the whole very useful in Abyssinia. Those that feed on living animals seldom stoop even at a stray fowl, whilst all their other prey is quite indifferent to the farmer, and the carrion-birds remove quickly whatever the indolent grazier has dragged outside his door. Finding plenty of food, they have no need to wander widely or periodically; yet the large species have their nests at considerable distances from their hunting districts, and commonly on inaccessible precipices.

Strix bubo, the only but very common owl of the up-country, and one Otus of the low plain, are treated as birds of ill-omen. From the entrails of the former the necromancer prepares a potent charm. The eagle, Aquila nævia (*Nas'r*), comes seldom near the villages, nor is he forward in his depredations. Falco biarmicus fights his superiors in size, and deprives them forcibly of their prey; it has got hence the appellation, *Ya Amora Alaka*, i. e. chief of the birds of prey. Morphnus occipitalis (*Adagoota*), a beautiful crested falcon, lives in the lower country of Giddem, and is particularly inert. Several species of Astur and Accipiter (*Bazi*) feed on small songsters and mice. Ternis, spec. (*Goodie*), removes innumerable quantities of locusts; and Milvus parasiticus (*Tshelvit*) cleans streets and premises in company with the crows. Gypaëtos barbatus (*Cheype*), extremely frequent in Shoa, draws near to butchers, and waits

patiently for his share—the paunch and other rejected parts of the victim. Vultur arrianus and fulvus (*Yellos*) smell their food many miles off, and gather round it in great numbers. The periodically returning wars, and the extensive stock of cattle kept throughout the habitable parts, feed, with never-failing supplies of carrion, horrible gangs of hyenas, jackals, dogs, and vultures. Cathartes percnopterus and Neophron Niger are less frequent, and always solitary.

The tribe of *Rasores* contains the few birds that are considered fit for Christian food; yet the common fowl (*Doroo*), the only domesticated kind, kept almost in every compound, is very much neglected, and not being of a superior breed, remains small and lean. All other meat is eaten raw by the Abyssinians, but fowls, either tame or wild, must be cooked. The wild ones, pintado, partridge, quail, and grouse, are not prohibited, but still suspected as unwholesome food; and if even long after an indulgence of such meat the gourmand falls sick, he invariably looks back upon that trespass as the cause of his indisposition. Numida cristata (*Chickra*), in bevies of many hundreds, range throughout the lower country. A very large kind of partridge (*Kok*) is found, not in coveys, but in pairs, running swiftly through furrows of the corn-fields. Dogs are taught to catch them without injury; and before being eaten, the bird is kept for some days, to obviate the bad effects of any unclean food which it may possibly have taken. This partridge attains the size of the pintado. Another kind, living on the high plateau, and also hunted down with dogs, resembles more that of middle Europe. Pterocles arenarius, and other species of grouse, occur in the deserts.

Pigeons are frequent both in Shoa and in the eastern provinces. *Wani*, *Ergeb*, and *Kumroo*, are appellations of different kinds, all too wild to tempt the Abyssinian to any exertion to catch or domesticate them. *Wani* is the largest, above brown, below slaty-grey; the head grey, with a black zone across the sinciput. Another is all grey, except a white zone on the upper neck, and a collar of darker arrow-headed feathers; a third also

grey, but with a white head, and brown edges on the wing-feathers. *Ergeb* has a peculiarly inflated beak; head and neck grey, shoulders and back olive-green, breast and belly citron-yellow, wing and tail-feathers whitish edged and tipped. *Kumroo* is the turtle-dove, one kind of which has elongated tail-feathers.

Otis Arabs, the largest bustard, which is as swift as the ostrich, destroys a great number of locusts and scorpions, and is therefore never eaten. Another smaller bustard (*Wato*) is variously coloured; it lives on the borders of the desert. Charadrius spinosus is a rare visiter of the lakes near the Háwash. Tachydromus isabellinus is an inhabitant of the plains of Efät; and Himantopus atropterus of the morasses near Angóllala.

Abundance of water makes the provinces of Shoa a favourite place of resort to many species of *Grallatores*. Among the herons are remarkable Ardea ephippiorhyncha, and another called *Alaka fattah*, having particularly long wing-feathers of a darker colour than the remainder of the body, which is above grey, below white. The former lives in the valley of the Abai, the latter about Angóllala, but migrates also to the West. Smaller kinds, as Garzetta, Nycticorax, arrive from the North in February, but commonly pass on still more southward, whence they return in May. Ibis religiosa stays for some months on the lakes of the upper country; Numenius, spec. (*Gaga*), about Ankóber. The common snipe, some kinds of pewits, the spoonbill, and the flamingo, sometimes extend their migrations as far as Shoa.

Geese and ducks swarm unmolested over the lakes of the western provinces; a few descend also to the plain. Chenalopex Ægyptiacus builds its nest upon high trees on the river side in Efät Another rare species carries on the frontal basis a thinly-feathered flexible bunch. All the birds of this class are strangely inapprehensive of danger when moulting or hatching. During their stay in Shoa they are occupied with both of these processes, but the rigorous proscriptions regarding food usually afford them protection.

Of *Mammalia*, the *Rodentia* seem to have no great extension through the cultivated provinces of Shoa. One small house rat (*Eid*), and a field mouse, Otomys albicaudatus, are very obnoxious indeed to the grain, but snares and traps keep them easily down on well-managed farms. Lepus capensis (*Dindjel*) frequents more the plains both of the low and of the up country, and does little damage. To eat of its flesh would be considered downright criminality, not less than myophagy itself. Hystrix cristata (*Shart*) lives only in abandoned termite-cones in the desert. A very rare large squirrel is found upon tamarind trees.

Cattle-breeding is, on the whole, in a more advanced state among the Galla than among the Amhára, who prefer agricultural pursuits. The common sheep (*Bug*) of Shoa is small, with coarse black wool: the Adaïel have the Hejáz lamb, short haired, with fat tail; the Galla, a most superior tall fleecy kind, also with fat tail, and without horns. With the latter the Amhára cross their breed. The Galla of Northern Abyssinia rear a peculiar kind with immensely long hair, commonly white; its fleece, dyed black, and then called *Lophisa*, is a dress much prized by chiefs and men of renown throughout the country. The cured skin (*Dabbalo*) of the common sheep is an indispensable part of the male dress. From the wool a kind of camlet cloth is woven. Goats (*Fial*) thrive better in the mountains; they are tall, horned, with short matted hair of many colours; in fact, quite identical with the European kind. The Adel have no breed of their own, but drive down annually from the Shoan marts vast herds into their savannas.

The Abyssinian horse (*Feras*) is small and held in little repute. The donkey (*Aheia*), of a sturdy and strong race, is indispensable to communication and commerce, and as a beast of burthen suffers less than the camel from long privation. The mule (*Bagalo*), higher priced than the mare itself, is eminently useful in the hills, being more sure-footed and better-winded than the horse; it is, however, much better cared for. The she mules are larger and stouter, but the males are the most enduring. The breed from the horse-mare and donkey-stallion is

patronized by the Abyssinians, but despised by their more warlike neighbours, the Galla, with whom the horse is a favourite. A wild donkey (*Ya meida aheia*, neither Zebra nor Quagga), a little larger than the common ass, herds in the prairies of the Adaïel country, and is timid, cautious, and swift of foot.

Bullocks (*Beri* or *Ferita*) are similar to the Zebu, but the hump is smaller. Some Galla tribes possess a peculiar breed (*Sanga*), the horns of which attain an enormous size, and serve for bottles; from the smaller horns drinking-cups are manufactured. The calves are not used for food. No work except dragging the plough and thrashing is required of the ox.

The wild buffalo (*Gosh*), Bubalus Pegasus, fierce and as yet untamed, inhabits the forests and jungles of Bulga and Mentshar all along the river Háwash; its chase is considered one of the most dangerous pursuits of the hunter, several human lives being frequently expended on the conquest of one beast. Strepsiceros capensis (*Agazin*), and Oryx capensis (*Sala*), are hunted on the borders of the desert. In the latter species, accident sometimes causes the loss of one horn,—a fact which probably gave rise to the story of the unicorn; moreover, the parallel horns are placed so near each other, that when the animal is seen *en profil* from a distance, it might well appear single-horned. Gazella Mhorr wanders in large herds through the desert; Antilope Saltiana (*Medaqua*) abounds from the sea-coast to the foot of the mountains.

Hyrax Abyssinicus (*Ashkoko*), a harmless inhabitant of nooks and corners of the rocks, is common to Shoa as well as to the hills of the Adel. Bruce's Rhinoceros (*Worsisa*), combining the more striking characters of the Asiatic and African species, that is, the two horns of the latter and the plaits and folds of the former, deserves a closer investigation; it lives in the deep jungles of Mentshar, on the banks of the Háwash. Phascochoerus Africanus (*Erya*), the African hog, infests the woods of the warmer districts, and is a horrible-looking brute. Hippopotamus amphibius (*Gomari*) hides its colossal frame during the day in the floods of the Háwash, the Jumma, and other large

rivers and lakes. The Wato, a certain caste among the Galla, subsist upon its flesh; and the thick skin is cut into shields or whips. Elephas Africanus (*Zihoon*) is dispersed in many small families, and destroys the plantations of sugar-cane and Juwarree along the foot of the mountains. Not the slightest attempt is made to put a stop to his ravages, the paltry weapons in use being of no avail, whilst severe loss of life follows the footsteps of the enraged animal. A small trade in ivory is notwithstanding carried on with the coast in the tusks found accidentally.

Lutra inunguis (*Devil's sheep*), rarely surprised on the banks of the river Bereza, furnishes in its body divers secret medicines to the initiated. Viverra Civetta (*Angeso*) is wild, but frequently kept in cages in the Galla countries to the south-west of Shoa. The Civet (*Bering*), taken out of the bag by means of a small spoon, and collected in cow-horns, is one of the precious articles which the slave caravans proceeding from the interior through Shoa to the coast, barter for their daily food. One Ichneumon (*Mootsheltshella*) robs the poultry-yard. The lion (*Anbassa*), and the leopard (*Nabr*), are well-known throughout Abyssinia. The former seldom pays a visit to the hills, hunting nightly along the banks of rivers, and lurking during the day in his jungle retreats; the latter is more common, and shuns less the presence of man. Both are run down on foot by bodies of men armed solely with lances, which they shower over the slowly retreating beast under a deafening yell. The spoils are an indispensable part of a chief's dress, and objects of importation from the West; the most prized, however, is the skin of the black leopard (*Gasela*), living in and beyond Guráguê.

The domestic cat is a rarity in Shoa; only great men place them as guardians in their storehouses. The dog (*Oosha*), generally a half-wild companion of the farmer, and inmate of his premises, becomes attached and useful when allowed to share the master's protection. It is taught to keep the herds in order, to catch birds, to defend property, to give warning on the approach of wild beasts. Not the tenth part of the quickly-

multiplying race possess owners; but their utility as scavengers proves their safeguard. Canis Anthus (*Dahela*), a wolf-like dog and an offensive thief, frequent in Efát, is caught in pitfalls; its liver has some mysterious virtue. The jackal (*Kabbaro*), and Hyæna crocuta (*Gib*), make nightly inroads into villages and towns; they fight the dogs, and for want of other prey drag off some of these. On the borders of the low country, the night camps must be fenced round with thorns, as a protection against their inroads.

Cercocebus griseo-viridis (*Tota*), lives upon wild figs. Cynocephalus Hamadryas (*Zingiro*), the male, with the mane of a lion and a powerful frame, is very mischievous and even dangerous; it congregates in caves and fissures of the rocks. Colobus (*Guresa*), the prettiest of all monkeys, and one duly patronized by the Abyssinians on account of its retired habits, is always on the top of the highest trees, commonly on the Woira, which bears its food.

Filfil, an animal that throws up mole-hills, baffles all attempts to catch it. Pteropus Ægyptiacus and Nycteris Thebaica (*Lelit off*, i.e. night-bird), are harmless, but suspected inhabitants of ruined buildings. An obscure idea of a former supremacy of man over the beasts of the field causes the Abyssinian Christian to view, in a literal sense, those legends which his pious ancestors have recorded of the singular dealings of holy men with the arch-fiend; and he still figuratively personates every evil passion of the human heart by some savage, treacherous, or subtle animal of the inferior creation.

The highlands of Abyssinia can, however, offer but a small number of wild animals, and even of these very few are exclusively her own. The cultivation of the greater portion of the land, the absence of extensive forests, jungles, morasses, caverns, and other places of retreat, added to the great diversity of the clime from that of the adjacent countries, which at once excludes the migratory tribes, are the causes of the fortunate contrast presented to the lowlands of the Adaiel, where the dominion of man has yet been very imperfectly established.

APPENDIX, No. III.

ON THE COFFEE TREE, TEA PLANT, AND COTTON, OF SOUTHERN ABYSSINIA.

Tradition assigns to the countries of Enárea and Cáffa the indigenous residence of the coffee tree. In Shoa Proper the cultivation and consumption are strictly interdicted, as savouring too strongly of the abhorred Mohammadan; but in proper situations it grows strong and healthy, and in all the bordering districts subject to Sáhela Selássie, where the restriction is not enforced, the plantations are numerous and thriving.

Planted before the rains, the seed soon appears above the ground, and when six months old, the offspring is transferred to take the place of some worn-out tree. Water and the manure of the sheep are plentifully supplied, and the crop, which, from a full bearing adult, is generally from thirty to forty pounds, is gathered in March and April. Averaging from eight to ten feet in height, with dark shining foliage, and branches loaded with fruit, it grows luxuriantly in the valleys in any sheltered situation, delighting especially in the soil produced by a decomposition of trap rock, which has been washed down from the adjacent heights; and although taking six years to arrive at maturity, it yields a slight return on the second season of its transplantation.

The berries are in the first instance of a dark green hue, which before pulling is suffered to turn red, a white milky-looking pulp called *gultaboo* meanwhile filling up the space between the cuticle and the seed. Having been shaken and gathered from the branches, the crop is spread in the sun until the pulp becomes sufficiently dry to admit of its removal, which, by continual free ventilation out of doors, is usually the case in one month. The seeds intended for the plantation are not divested of the husk, but sown by the handful in a small

plot, which is carefully manured and watered; and the *gullaboo*, sold separately from the bean, is employed as a beverage with the decoction of the *chaat*.

For the better security of his own monopoly at the ports of Zeyla and Bérbera, the Ameer of Hurrur opposes the importation of coffee into his own dominions, both from Shoa and from the country of the Galla. The plant is extensively and successfully cultivated; but the price given at Hurrur is high in comparison with that paid in Abyssinia; and the average demanded on the coast by the merchants of the former principality, varying from five pence to seven pence per pound, would seem to be in unison with that customary at Massowah in the Red Sea.

The difficulties attending the tedious road to the coast; the lazy indifferent character of the Danákil camel owners, who, regardless of the value of time, spend months upon the journey; and the fitful caprice evinced by the various chieftains through whose territories the caravan must pass—all form great obstacles to the conveyance of the cheaper produce from Abyssinia, although these might doubtless be overcome within a reasonable period by the well-directed efforts of British perseverance. In Cáffa and Enárea, coffee grows wild like a weed over the rich surface of the country. The beverage is in universal use among the inhabitants; the price paid is almost nominal; and the convenience of water carriage is alone wanting towards the transportation of the product in unlimited quantities to every portion of the globe.

Chaat is a shrub very extensively cultivated, both in Shoa and in the countries adjacent. It is in general use among the inhabitants as a substitute for tea, which, in all its properties and qualities, it closely resembles. The plant is said to have been brought originally from the western mountains, of which the elevation being from five to eight thousand feet, agrees with that of the Chinese tea districts, whilst the average temperature does not exceed 60° Fahrenheit. In a light gravelly soil it attains the height of twelve feet; and the leaves being plucked

during the dry season, and well dried in the sun, fetch from one penny to two-pence the pound. They are either chewed, or boiled in milk, or infused in water; and by the addition of honey, a pleasant beverage is produced, which, being bitter and stimulative, dispels sleep if used to excess.

The virtues of the *chaat* are equally to be appreciated with those of the *yerba mate*, recently introduced into England from Brazil and Paraguay. It is already known under the appellation of "Celastrus edulis," and belongs to Pentandria Monogynia *Linn*, and to the natural family of Celastrineæ, or to that sub-family of the Rhamneæ, which have in the flower the stamens alternating with the petals. The family of Rhamneæ, namely, the genus Rhamnus itself, supplies to the poorer classes in China a substitute for tea, and is known under the name of Rhamnus Theezaus *Linn.*[1]

Cotton of two kinds grows in the sequestered nooks of the eastern face of the mountains of Shoa, and in the valleys at the extreme foot of the range; but from the superior luxuriance of the plant, and the amount of crop produced in the lower situations, the natural climate would appear to exist in those sheltered spots, which in atmosphere much resemble the more favoured parts of Western India. The Efät shrub varies, according to the locality and supply of water, from three feet in height to upwards of seven, and usually assuming the form of a pyramid, extends its lower branches to a width equal to the stature—the size of the leaves, and the soft and yielding nature of the stem, imparting a strong external resemblance to the Bourbon cotton. Eight and nine inches in circumference

[1] The *chaat* may thus be characterized:—

Frutex inermis; foliis oppositis, petiolatis, oblongis, serrato-dentatis, glabris. Calyx minimus, persistens. Petala 5. Stamina 5-petalis alternantia. Fructus superus, oblonge baccatus, 5-locularis, polyspermus, vel abortive monospermus. Inflorescentia axillaris, cymosa: cymi dichotome stipulati.

The plant supplying the Paraguay tea is a species of Ilex, and belongs to the same family of Celastrineæ, sub-order Aquifoliaceæ.

are not unfrequently attained; and the advantages of a very productive crop twice in each year, the existence of the plant during five seasons, and the heavy return of the particularly fine wool during the very first, award to the species a most deserving pre-eminence.[1]

The indigenous plant of Efât is not, however, so much esteemed as that from Gondar, which, instead of rising tall and straight from the ground, assumes a spreading dwarfy appearance.[2] The wool is considered superior, and the cloth produced is softer and more elastic, but its existence is limited to three years. Both are planted indiscriminately in the same field, although, when gathered, the crops are preserved unmixed; and after the fifth year the Efât shrub is cut over close to the ground, which is then ploughed up, and sown with wheat or other grain, when, on the removal of the harvest the young cotton shoots are well above the ground, and will yield during two further seasons.

The seed, having been placed for some time in wood-ashes, is well rubbed with red earth before planting; and wherever the locality is favourable to irrigation, water is not spared. The pod, when ripe, is cut with a knife, the husk removed, and the wool deposited in a bag, with the utmost care to exclude extraneous matter. One full bearing bush produces twice during the twelve months between four and five pounds of raw stuff.

[1] Gossypium Efatense. Seeds completely covered with a close down. Cotton white; capsules 3-celled, 3-valved; flowers small, with a red fundus; leaves 3 to 5-lobed; lobes acuminated.

[2] Gossypium Gondarense. Seeds sprinkled with short hairs. Cotton white; capsules 3-celled, 3-valved; flowers large, yellow; leaves 3 to 5-lobed; lobes commonly obtuse.

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